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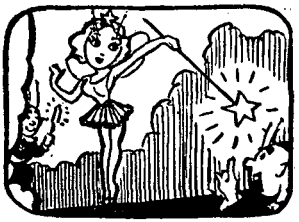

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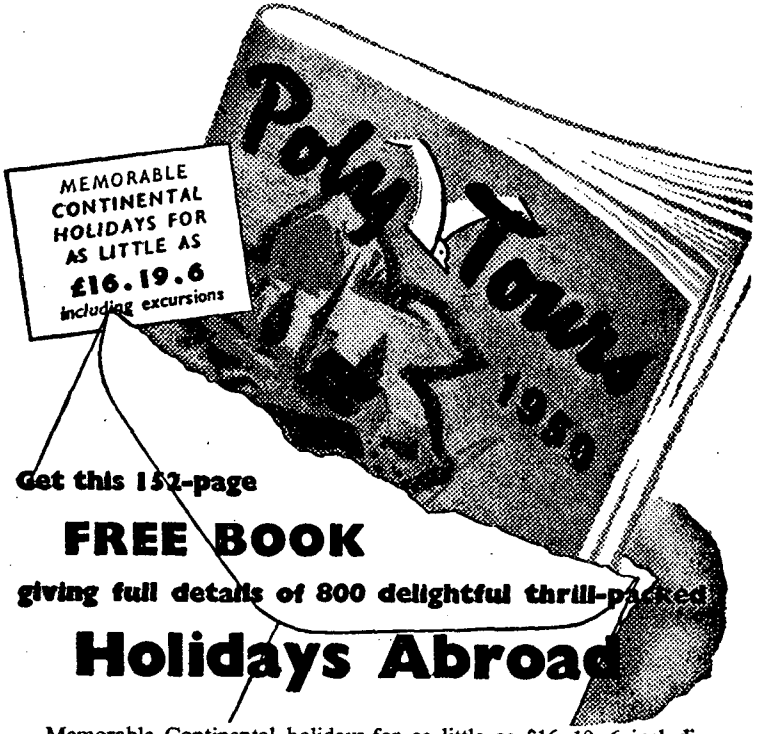

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ARGOSY

Contents for March, 1950

Vol. XI **No. 3**

		Page
Promise of Spring	**J. H. B. Peel**	**4**
Pursuit	**T. O. Beachcroft**	**5**
From "Malice Bites Back" by permission of the author and John Lane The Bodley Head		
Trivia	**Dorothy Parker**	**14**
Corruption of Theophilus Frost	**Clive Burnley**	**15**
George St. George's Locket	**Norman Edwards**	**23**
Bacchanale		**32**
Finder of Lost Things	**Edmund Candler**	**35**
From "The Emergency Man and Other Stories" by permission of the author's executors and Jonathan Cape		
Second Fiddle	**Joseph Wechsberg**	**47**
If This Be Love		**52**
"Perhaps," from "Collected Poems," by permission of the Society of Authors, Trustees of the Estate of the late A. E. Housman, and Jonathan Cape; "All Seem to Know," from "Love in the Valley," by courtesy of Constable and Co.		
How Long To Hope	**Julian Ward**	**55**
Songs of Innocence!		**70**
King Od	**Howard Jones**	**71**
To Each His Own		**74**
The letter by G. K. Chesterton is reprinted from "Gilbert Keith Chesterton" by Maisie Ward		
The Shining God	**Michael Hastings**	**75**
The Story of Ming-Y		**83**
Doomsday Deferred	**Will F. Jenkins**	**93**
At Close of Eve		**106**
The Shakespearean Theory	**A. A. Milne**	**109**
Spring Fever	**Ogden Nash**	**112**
Miracle of Saint Anthony	**Richard Arvay**	**113**
Ships At Night	**H. V. Morton**	**126**
By permission of Methuen and Co.		
The Captive	**Caroline Gordon**	**127**
Argosy Crossword		**160**

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Promise of Spring

IT was March, and I had gone to pick the year's first primroses.

Primroses hereabouts are plentiful, yet not lavishly so. They grow in abundance, but only for those who know where to seek them. The earliest, as I had long ago learned, are to be found in what was once an ancient track, but is now so overgrown that the wayfarer must wear stout boots and thick trousers, and ply a deft ash, to burrow through the skeins of hawthorn and hazel, bryony and blackberry . . .

It was one of those elusive afternoons when even a countryman might need a second glance before he could name the season. The sky was sheer June, avid and unflecked; the sun—the wan sun—reflected October; and, beneath that bright sky, the green hedgerows suggested August. In the wind it was cool enough for brisk movement; in the hollow of the track it was warm, and spring lurked, full of promises.

I had come here in February, looking for the first primrose, knowing that I should not find it. Just so, in a fortnight's time, and with the same delightful awareness of futility, I shall strain after the first cuckoo; and, as today I saw the first primrose, so at last I shall hear the first cuckoo, in God's own time, not mine.

J. H. B. PEEL, *Small Calendars*

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PURSUIT

"Anyone can see," he said, "that dog is half a fox"

by T. O. BEACHCROFT

ONE Sunday morning the little dark foreigner was in the garden of his cottage near the church; he was talking to a black dog, which he called Turco. This was the first time the inhabitants of the village had seen them. In one small and almost feminine hand, he held a biscuit aloft.

"Lie down, Turco," he said. "No, Turco, don't get up. Now, Turco, lie. No, Turco, you must wait."

In front of him stood Turco, looking puzzled and alert. He was a mongrel, black all over save for a white chest. He stood about the size of a fox terrier, but was perhaps rather slimmer in build, and taller on the leg.

"Now, lie down," said his master.

Turco half sat down, half lay down, then sprang up again and barked in protest. His face was sharp and pointed, and he had an air of Cockney brightness that was set off by two large ears which stuck up and out, suggesting a fox or even a bat. One eye was very bright and black, but the other was dim, and rolled in milky blindness in his head.

His master was patient and tried again: "Now, Turco; sit, Turco: steady!"

But Turco was not steady. He whined. He barked. Finally, he stood up on his hind legs and placing his paws together, waved them frantically up and down as if beseeching his master to give him the biscuit.

A very low wall of large flat stones ran along the side of the garden, so that everything could be seen from the village green. It was scarcely more than knee height, and wallflowers grew in it freely, and large clumps of yellow alyssum; in places it had broken down altogether and the stones taken to patch walls and flag paths in other people's gardens.

Inside the wall, the garden grew in an unkempt yet glittering riot. Already the grass had been rather clumsily scythed, showing white and brown tufts where it had been allowed to run wild for

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years. There was the scythe still leaning against the brick wall of the cottage.

People came drifting by in twos and threes on their way to church. Some idlers stood about on the village green. The small stranger, feeling shy perhaps, left the cottage garden and went inside with Turco.

After church, as the crowd slowly dispersed, there was no sign of him, and later when a group collected and were drinking beer outside the inn, he still kept indoors. Once or twice he came out into the garden for a few moments to put away the scythe, or to pick a few flowers out of the general tangle.

Mr. Cummins, owner of the Church Farm just across the green, strolled over to *The Climbing Rose* with his Welsh sheepdog at his heels. He joined the group of men under the two big lime trees which shaded the tables and benches outside. Cummins was a short, rather piggy little man, who thought nothing of appearing on Sunday in an open-necked shirt, knee breeches and a stained working jacket. He always drank beer from half-past twelve till two every Sunday, winter or summer, rain or shine.

"Well," said the farmer. "I see there's a new chap living in Carrier's Cottage."

"Yes, Cummins. Little dark chap he is—foreign looking," said George Allport, the innkeeper.

"He was out in his garden before church time," someone else chipped in, "teaching his dog tricks."

"What sort of a dog?" said Cummins.

"It wasn't any sort of a dog," said Allport. "Just a little black mongrel. Blind of one eye, too. Funny looking tyke."

"Teaching him tricks!" said Cummins with great scorn. "*Tricks*. They do get up to the most odd-ratted things. I'll give him tricks if he comes after my chickens."

There was a pause. Cummins was beginning to warm up, eking out his words with nods and grimaces and jerks of his thumb this way and that.

"Some kid or other from one o' they *new* families," he said, pointing his thumb vaguely up the road. "He came round my farmyard with some long-legged high-reena of a black dog. I gave him such a towsing as he'll never forget. Said I'd have the law on him if ever he came near my farm again. Frightened him all ends up, so I did. Here, give me another pint and bung a drop of gin in it. Town vermin, that's what some of 'em are."

So he railed on. It was part of his Sunday ritual, and during the last few years newcomers and changes had been one of his favourite topics. He disliked them all heartily and impartially.

Presently the new stranger came out with his hat on, but, seeing

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the crowd in front of *The Climbing Rose* he turned the other way through his own small orchard, and took Turco across the fields at the back.

Cummins slapped a fat hand down on the beer-stained table in front of him. He had a curious habit of slapping tables with his pudgy hand, when he became vehement, instead of punching them. He sat for a moment with his hand down in a puddle of spilled beer on the table, breathing hard. Between his open lips the tip of his tongue rested like a ripe strawberry; his tongue which contained so much evil speaking and poison.

"Suppose his dinner's on the cook," said Cummins, "and he'll be back along soon." He was quite right, and in twenty minutes they saw him return. Cummins called for his third pint, and presently the brooding noontide peace of high June settled over the village green.

During the next week or so the village saw very little of the newcomer. He kept to his cottage. Sometimes he would flutter like a moth in the long dusk of the summer evenings, tidying up the tangle of his garden.

Meanwhile, Turco was better at mixing than his master. He had an inner urge which kept him ever on the move. He made the habit of a regular trot round the village, approaching all the other dogs with much tail wagging and a stiff, anxious walk. He would try always to keep his good eye towards them, whisking round in nervous jerks.

On the second day he made friends with the colonel's two pale gold Labradors, and they even welcomed him up the drive of their own house. The next day he found himself in the centre of five or six pure-bred Shetlands, from the kennels of a well-known breeder. They came at him from all angles, and Turco leapt round and round in sudden starts, facing one way and then another. Spike, the Welsh sheepdog at Cummins's farm, was always a little temperamental. When Turco approached him outside the gate of his farmyard, Spike stood stock still with his head high in the air and a silent sneering snarl on his lips. Spike was a beautiful animal, grey and white all over, with a white ruff and a nose long and pointed like that of an English collie.

It was not a matter of great importance, perhaps, who lived in the minute Queen Anne brick house known as Carrier's Cottage. For some years it had stood derelict with a broken roof. Many strangers had come to Netherby lately. The housing shortage had followed the wartime evacuation. Yet now for the first time a stranger had invaded the very heart of Netherby—the real Netherby, as they thought of it; the true Netherby; that little group of time-worn

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houses that glowed in age-old lustre round the village green and the church, under the great lime and elm trees.

The newcomers had made the dwellers in this charmed citadel look again at their treasures. Distant parts of Netherby might straggle and seem cheap. In places you might see a corrugated-iron roof, or a bungalow looking as if it had been run together out of packing cases; but here, round the green, the long brick walls of the old colonel's garden, and of his Queen Anne house, were the colour of ripened peaches; *The Climbing Rose* was a low white and black beamed building put there by Henry VIII as a Berkshire shooting box; Cummins's farm stood away from the green, next to the churchyard, discreetly curtained behind a mass of honeysuckle and ivy; the few cottages were all of mellowed brick, or black beamed like the inn.

Next door to Carrier's Cottage lived Miss Halford, and it was she who, in course of time, supplied further information about her new neighbour. Miss Halford was the sister of the former village schoolmaster, and she made it her business to know everybody and everything.

In the course of the summer people learnt that Turco's master was an Austrian; he came from the borders of Austria and Czechoslovakia. His surname seemed to be unpronounceable, but his Christian name was Walther—and by this he became known. Miss Halford preserved the German pronunciation but the rest just called him Walter—or "that foreigner." He had survived the war years in Austria, only to find himself at the end of it all a political refugee.

He could scarcely talk of these things, giving only monosyllabic answers to Miss Halford's questions, and falling into long unhappy silences. He could talk, however, and liked to speak of his native countryside, telling of the sombre calm of immense pine woods, unchanging from season to season, unless they were lost under snow; or of hidden lakes reflecting the far-off blue of the sky. All this he told to Miss Halford in his slow, over-precise English, occasionally breaking off, interrupting himself with a sigh, and leaving his thought with the words, "But still—"

He was a tailor, Miss Halford learnt, living in a small country town, with his own circle of customers spread out among the surrounding villages. He had sat on a committee that helped the promotion of local arts and crafts. Now he worked as a garment hand with a London firm. He went up and down to London two or three times a week. On the other days, and often at weekends, he worked in his cottage. It was very hard work. "But still—"

He had a wife and little girl in Austria. Soon, he hoped, they would join him; that was why he had come to live in the country.

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"Well, they'll be safe here," said Miss Halford. "That's quite certain."

He smiled and sighed. Turco, ever seeking action, wandered about the room, stared at him with his one good eye and scraped at the door, asking to be let out.

"Turco is always fussing," he said apologetically.

"Where does he come from?" said Miss Halford. "Have you had him long?"

"He was a stray," said Walter; "a stray like me. I picked him up when I was in London, before I took this little cottage. He was starved, and he asked us to take him in. Then he waved his paws at us, and my landlady could not say 'no'."

"I cannot teach him tricks," he went on. "He is too excited. But he does know one trick."

Walter set the living-room door ajar.

"Now, Turco," he said, "shut the door."

In an instant Turco bounded up against the door and closed it with a loud slam. He barked unceasingly.

"There," said Walter.

Miss Halford smiled.

"A very fine trick," she said.

"It never fails," said Walter. Then in quick succession Turco shut the back door and the front door, and then the door of the shed outside, barking the whole time.

"He knew that trick before he came to me," said Walter. "He had a good home, I think; it's his only trick."

The summer drew on to the crisp days of autumn. Walter was merging into the general landscape. He would have merged completely if it had not been for Turco. Turco went here, there and everywhere, routing out bones that people had put aside for salvage; turning up in people's kitchens; staring up into their faces with a paw raised, and a pert question in his one good eye. He seemed equally ready to have a saucepan thrown at him, or a tasty scrap. After nightfall even he would keep up his rounds; rattling dustbins, scuttering away into the darkness if he was surprised, then barking back from a safe distance. All these were town habits, which in the country he seemed unable to shed.

"Something daft about that dog o' that foreigner's," said Cummins. "Silly little heathen. Cluttering up the place and getting round my legs. There'll be trouble along of that tyke, I'll bet. More like a monkey than a dog; or a jumping jenny or something."

He ground the point of his stick into the road and grunted contemptuously. The children of the village, however, welcomed Turco. He asked them to notice him, rising on his hind legs and waving his

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paws beseechingly up and down. They called it saying his prayers.

"Funny Turco; go on; say your prayers, Turco."

But Turco would only do it when he felt like it, and never once was he known to do it to order. His great joy, however, was running. Out in the field at the back of the house, he ran as if all his wits had gone from him. He would rush and rush by himself in wide circles and figures of eight.

He liked, best of all, to run with other dogs. Sometimes the colonel's golden Labradors lumbered yards behind, then gave up the chase and stood watching him with pink tongues lolling. On other days he outran the Shetlands, beating them in frantic bursts of speed when they drew close. Once Spike, the Welshman, tried to catch Turco, then lost his temper and pelted snarling after him in a furious straight line. Turco kept easily away from him, till Spike walked off in disgust, leaving Turco still running.

It was the following day that Turco made his big mistake with Spike. He suddenly leapt into the farmyard, and went nosing round. The hens cackled and ran about. Spike was sitting chained in his kennel, and when chained he was always in an explosive mood. He leapt up like a firework spitting and crackling with rage. He dragged the kennel behind him and for some minutes there was a whirlpool of dogs and hens, of squawking, barking and banging. Somehow, at the end of all this frenzy a hen lay dead.

That evening Cummins knocked loudly at the door of Carrier's Cottage and began to bluster.

"That dog ought to be destroyed. I'm warning you. Get someone to knock him on the head for you, I should. Vermin he is. You ain't no right to bring that sort of dog into the country. If I see him chasing my milk cows, I'll shoot him."

"I am sorry," said Walter. "I am sorry." He made a movement with his white hands, as Cummins, breathing closely upon him, gradually edged him farther back into his own doorway. When Cummins had gone he said sadly, almost absent-mindedly, "Shut the door, Turco."

After this incident Cummins laid many crimes to Turco's door: throughout Netherby people began to cry, "That foreigner's blasted dog." Walter began to meet unfriendly faces, nods and blank looks, instead of friendly "good mornings."

"We don't want all these blasted foreigners," said Cummins in *The Climbing Rose*, as he stared moodily into a pint of beer. "Snooping round our aerodromes, and all. All the trouble comes from foreigners and folks o' that sort: always has done as far as I can see. Why don't us clear 'em all out?"

Miss Halford talked it over with her brother, the retired schoolmaster.

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" It's all so unfortunate," she said, " and so uncalled for. And seeing what his dog means to Walter, we can't possibly ask him to give him away. That would really be the best plan."

As the weeks went by she saw that the idea was impossible. She never even broached it. Walter's affection for Turco was very great, for Turco also was an outcast. Turco had been lost and wandering, pleading with waving paws to Walter to give him some human attention and a home. Walter made an effort to keep him indoors, and sometimes Turco was seen peering and whining out of an upper-storey window.

One clear morning (it was now early autumn), Walter looked out of Carrier's Cottage and he saw, rippling and flowing down the one street of Netherby, a sight he had never known in his native hills. On they came, black and white and brown, heads alert and sterns in the air, twelve or fifteen couple of foxhounds. The edges of the stream flowed over banks and up on to Walter's low stone wall and down again, bringing away a small scatter of loose mortar and stone. One hound went questingly up Miss Halford's garden path and peered in at her open front door.

He was called back with a loud shout and a whipcrack and went flinging off to the pack again. Arthur Coombes, the huntsman, followed the pack on a large, gaunt black horse which paced along solemnly. Coombes sat very upright, his crop held at a jaunty angle on one hip, with the lash trailing down to the ground.

Walter, looking out of his upper window, stared eagerly. It was a brilliant October morning and all the air was a clear shining blue, pale as a sparrow's egg, yet with depth upon depth in its paleness. Against its northern brilliance *The Climbing Rose* sparkled like a house made of black-and-white china, and all the russet leaves of autumn lay one by one clear and separate, silver-gilt upon turquoise. When he reached his garden he found the whole pack had stopped on the village green. Looking over his low wall, he was almost among them. The huntsman dismounted; then an arm came through the window of the inn and handed him a tankard of beer.

Behind the gate of the Church Farm, Spike suddenly leapt up and down in an access of rage. A large hound, nearly black all over, placed its paws half way up the gate and growled back. Two others snarled, their lips curling and their hackles rising. A cowman working in the farmyard tried to calm Spike, but the dog's Welsh soul was upset by this horde of strangers, and he was spreading a queer atmosphere. Across the road, the Colonel called in his two golden Labradors.

Walter looked round for Turco and saw him on the far side of the green. For a moment Turco stood on the churchyard wall, then

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he jumped down and began working his way nervously past the edge of the pack.

No one could ever quite piece together the horrid thing that now happened. As Turco passed the farmyard gate there was a new flurry of rage from Spike. There was a sudden hell's broth of snarling from dogs and hounds together. The huntsman shouted. For a moment Turco was down. Then he was snapping and turning this way and that.

A second later he was flying for his life. At his heels went the black hound, and then half the pack was after him, giving tongue as they went. Turco made a desperate attempt to reach his own house, but he was cut off. Going at top speed he turned through Miss Halford's garden, through her hedge, then out to the open fields at the back. Walter rushed across his garden, trying to reach Turco; but he was too late. There was nothing he could do but to stand in a silent agony and watch the hunt go, across the meadows and on towards the river.

On the green Arthur Coombes shouted: but some of the hounds were only half trained; there had not been much hunting in recent years. He made his girths tight, mounted his black, pushed through Miss Halford's garden and put the horse at the hedge. It refused the first time, and when it finally sailed over, and broke into a loose gallop, Turco and the leading hounds were out of sight.

Several people collected round Carrier's Cottage and tried to talk to Walter, asking him what had happened. He had words for no one, and, shaking his head, went into the house. A moment later they saw him staring across the fields from an upstairs window.

He saw them going across the first big field. In the open Turco gained rapidly, running as if he were possessed. Oh, Turco, how fast you can run! If you would turn now, Turco, and run straight for home, all would be well. But these hounds run by scent. Your heart will burst, and they will hunt you down.

Turco reached a hedgerow in the distance and vanished. The hounds followed, one by one, running silently. Then the black horse jumped the hedge, and there was only the field left to stare at, and the distant trees outlined against the blue of the October sky.

"I am afraid Turco will be caught," said Miss Halford at her garden gate.

"I've heard afore, a long time back, o' the hounds chasing a dog," said the cowman from the farm. "Ran him down in the first two mile, and tore him to bits, as if he'd been a fox."

Cummins strolled up and joined the group.

"The dog *is* half a fox," he said. "Didn't I always say there was something queer about him? Look how he went for my chickens."

The cowman agreed.

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"I don't believe it," said Miss Halford firmly. "There's no fox in him. He may have been a nuisance; but he was so—so humanized."

"You can teach a fox tricks, can't you?" said Cummins, "I've seen a pet fox before now."

"I wish we could do something," said Miss Halford.

"There's no help for it," said Cummins. "They're bound to get him."

"Those hounds were out of hand," said Miss Halford. "There's no fox about it. They all but started on your Spike, come to that, Cummins."

"They did," said old Mrs. Hobbs, who lived nearby. "Coombes oughtn't to go bringing his hounds round the village in that state."

There was a pause. Suddenly the feeling had gone completely against Cummins.

"That dog meant the world to the foreign fellow," said old Mrs. Hobbs. "More like a child."

The women shook their heads and sighed deeply.

The little group dispersed, and presently Coombes came cantering back. He said that Turco and the whole pack had swum the river Nether, and his horse, rather short of hard feed, was in no shape for further galloping.

It was only afterwards that it was possible to piece together the course the hunt took. Different people had seen them at various points. Turco began almost at once to try for a big circle and reach his home. He circled right, away from his blind eye, and so came to the river Nether after some two miles.

He swam the Nether, probably losing ground and spending a great deal of strength. The hounds gained on him here, and were close behind as he was seen from the valley farm running up a long steeply-climbing slope. The farmer vainly tried to call them off.

He went into the dense woods at the top of the hill and tried to find a hiding place. The experienced leaders of the pack routed him out. It was here that he must have driven a thorn into his pad which slowed him down badly. Tiring desperately he came down the hill and took another long weary stretch of marshy field cut up by dykes, the leading hounds right on his heels. There was no time to twist and turn now, or to choose his way. Yet at this moment Turco, with a wounded paw, run down almost to his last breath, with foam on his lips, found his big circle had brought him near home. He still had strength to keep going for a mile longer.

It was nearly an hour after Turco and the hounds had vanished from sight that Walter suddenly tore to the gate of Carrier's Cottage.

"I've seen him," he shouted. "They're coming back."

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For a moment he saw Turco's face, foam flecked, desperate with fear as he jumped weakly over the churchyard wall.

"Turco," shouted Walter. "Turco."

Turco made a last dash across the green past Walter, and disappeared through the front door of Carrier's Cottage.

Walter tried to get back and shut the door; tried in vain to fight the hounds off, slipped on the garden path and went down with two or three hounds on top of him.

"Shut the door, Turco," he shouted as he fell. "Shut the door."

With a heartening crash the door slammed in the hounds' faces; and Turco was heard barking faintly once or twice behind it.

A moment later, Coombes, and Cummins himself, and Allport from the inn were among the hounds beating them off and helping Walter to his feet. He rose unsteadily, pale and trembling, but unhurt.

"Poor Turco," he said. "I am afraid he causes much trouble."

It needed no Miss Halford to spread this story round Netherby. It was the talk of the village for days, and people began to look at Walter with friendly and interested eyes. In the next few weeks men to whom he had never spoken stopped him and asked him if he felt all right. A man, it seems, is entitled to a friendship with a dog: and Cummins had been wrong about the whole business from the start.

* * *

TRIVIA

When I consider, pro and con,
What things my love is built upon—
A curly mouth; a sinewed wrist;
A questioning brow, a pretty twist
Of words as old and tried as sin;
A pointed ear, a cloven chin;
Long, tapered limbs; and slanted eyes
Not cold nor kind, nor darkly wise—
When so I ponder, here apart
What shallow boons suffice my heart,
What dust-bound trivia capture me—
I marvel at my normalcy.

DOROTHY PARKER

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CORRUPTION OF THEOPHILUS FROST

"You may thank providence for one thing," she said

by CLIVE BURNLEY

IT was on the evening of the thirtieth of June, 1785, which was a Thursday, that Theophilus Frost finally and with no reservation whatever, confessed himself a failure—an energetic failure, like a fly on a windowpane, worn out by his own efforts at success, and baffled always by some glass or other.

People who met the Trevathicks often went away feeling like that.

In the whole county of Cornwall no Revenue Officer was more zealous or less successful than Frost, who that very day, acting on the soundest and most expensive information, had combed Sam Trevathick's coast farm from chimney to cellar, from beach to high road, in search of three hundred illicit barrels of French wines run ashore from the *Happy Riddance.* He had not only failed to smell as much as an empty bottle but in addition had contrived to put himself, with a little help from the Trevathicks, into a situation that was dangerous, unpleasant and humiliating—although on the face of it, sitting on the grass above Bengal Cove on a late summer's evening was not a bad way of passing the time, with the lazy sea making hushing noises on the smoothed sand and the cooling twilight air as still as a cavern.

Above Bengal Cove stood the ruins of Bengal House, an old Trevathick property not long since destroyed by fire, the result, 'twas commonly said, of too heartily burning a signal flare to an offshore lugger. But the old barn beside the ruins was intact, and, when Theophilus came upon it with two dragoons at his back, stoutly padlocked. Old Sam Trevathick's face was seamed like poplar bark, and about as expressionless; he had no key, he said; 'twas with his brother Saul, at that time in Truro, and moreover he could not precisely remember whether there was anything at all in the barn. He thought not. He seemed to remember, he said, that they had put the lock on, as law abiding citizens, to stop the smugglers using it.

This was altogether too much, and Frost had his dragoons break the door. They broke it down with a clatter, so that the dust rose

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like smoke. And there within was not even a single tapped keg—such as an indifferent church-going officer might at any time find in the rectory—but only tables, chairs, beds, pots and pans and fire-irons, piled up high. Old Sam remembered then, inscrutable as ever; 'twas here they'd put the house fittings when the old place burnt down—two hundred pounds worth of furniture, now lying plain open to all comers, because the door could not be mended till morning. Let the tinners inshore get wind of it and they would—and there'd be a truckamuck up on the track, said Sam, and a parcel of thieves that much the richer. In addition there were the smugglers, powerfully dangerous folk, who could make as much out of that barnful of fine timber as from five times across the English Channel and back!

"I give you my fair word, Mr. Frost, that I'll take the law against you for every quarter of half a penny of the value of every single hair of a broom that's missing from Bengal Barn come morning. Not against the Revenue, mark you, but against Mr. Theophilus Frost of Tudy—for likely enough the Revenue'll not want to be concerned in this spoiling of property."

Theophilus knew he was trapped. Old Sam would see to it that not a twig of a besom was left in the barn by morning, and there'd be never a hope of proving where it had all gone. As for two hundred pounds, Frost hadn't a fifth of it. So was zeal to put him in a debtor's prison for the rest of his days?

There was one way out. Not very dignified, not very pleasant, but at least an escape. He told old Sam that he had long had a mind, as part of his duty, to keep a night watch on Bengal Cove. He would do it tonight, and at the same time he could keep an eye on the sticks of furniture.

"Wish you joy of it," said old Sam, "I wish you a sight of the dawn, too," and he went away chuckling. The dragoons could hardly help, for Frost had promised them to their captain again by nightfall. As they rode back inshore, they too were laughing at the joke of it.

So Theophilus sat, head in hands, before Bengal Barn, and the dusk turned bloodshot with sunset, and then purple like a great flower, and the first stars pricked the sky with the suddenness of creation, and the tired waves went hush-hush-hush along the sands of Bengal Cove. And he could hear again the precise and sacerdotal voice of Mr. Carnarvon, his superior, saying:

"It is not merely that you accomplish nothing, Frost; that while your colleagues do at least seize some small consignment of contraband or other from time to time, you do not chance upon so much as a silk handkerchief—but the thing which impresses me, and will doubtless impress the commissioners themselves as soon as

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I make a report upon the matter, is the great pains to which you put yourself and the considerable expense to which you put the service to achieve this melancholy result."

But if Frost had been hoist with his own petard, there was one other, did he but know it, who was like to be blown as high, and that was no-one but the old fox himself, old Sam Trevathick.

The last thing he wished for was to have such a revenue man as this sitting around Bengal Barn with time on his hands—not merely that the furniture might be whisked away, but because, when the old house had been burnt down, the cellars, by their nature, had remained quite sound cellars, and were at this moment in use as such, being filled to bursting point with good wine that was out of bond without ever having been in.

Here lay the entire cargo of the *Happy Riddance* except for four kegs that had been left, for a particular reason, in the Cuddy Hole, which was a cleft of rock in the headland. And since most of Trevathick's man-power was either on the water or in Truro arranging deliveries, the position was difficult.

Sam's first effort was hardly worthy of him—sending a barefoot boy to tell Frost his lodgings in Tudy were afire and old Mrs. Zion, his landlady, much scorched and all his gear lost. Theophilus saw through that clearly enough and terrified the lad by telling him it was treason to lie to the Revenue, and meant being quartered alive with a butcher's cleaver, whereupon the youth lied no longer and made off with all haste.

Old Sam's second effort was more creditable.

Theophilus had by this time been sitting alone some hours in the dark warm night, listening only to the hush-hush-hush of the tired sea, so like his own pulse beating, and when wakefulness was so like sleep, how could a man tell the difference? So that he slept at last, bent double over the bank he sat on.

She kicked him on the shin to wake him.

She held a lantern in one hand and carried in the other a tray and on the tray were a pot of ale and a pasty as thick as a man's arm.

"Mr. Frost? They told me you kept a lonely watch and I cannot abide suffering, even among the Revenue. It's likely you'll need what I've brought."

There was nothing he desired more. Stumbling to his feet out of his cramped sleep she seemed to him, laden as she was, as beautiful as an angel—and indeed not even the unkind way the lantern threw shadows upwards across her face could altogether disguise her comeliness—as he had time enough to see after he had first devoured, with his eyes, the victuals on the tray.

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" My name is Dolly Trevathick, and I am daughter to Samuel Trevathick of Polbarren. But for all that, this is not poisoned." She doused the lantern. " You can eat as well in the dark and 'twill be as well not to burn a beacon. There are some powerful rogues in these parts, Mr. Frost."

" I can't put words to half my gratitude," said Theophilus, and pulled a mighty draught out of the jug. " Damme if I can say anything that fits it, except it is the kindest thing since the saints. I'd have sold my share in salvation for just this, indeed I would."

" Ah ! " she said. " And would you now ? "

" And 'tis the last kindness I thought to have from your name and place. Although," he said, " you *were* good enough to send along a scrap of a lad to tell me Mrs. Zion's was burned to the ground and the old lady half dead with fright."

" 'Tis all of seven days since I saw the house and it might have chanced to burn as well as another, the careless way people have with their cooking. But even if it happened not to be true, then it was done kindly, to take you out of danger."

He laughed, a little thickly, because his mouth was full.

" Aye, Mr. Frost," said Dolly Trevathick. " Danger is what I said. More than peril enough for one man, with only a pitiful two-foot hanger to slash with. I am a weak woman and I dislike bloody things, wherefore I tried to send you safe away, by some means or another. For, d'you see, there are plenty of vast rascals in these parts who'd be ready enough to share a dram with a Revenue man if his name didn't chance to be Frost—Frost, who never had short sight at full moon, who never held the palm of his hand out backwards.

" Let it be known that Frost keeps a lonely vigil at Bengal Cove and there'll be a sharpening of cutlasses, I shouldn't wonder, from Sennen as far as Cawsand Bay. And more than that, there's the tinners : a savage tribe, at the best."

" You won't frighten me, ma'am," said Theophilus. " And if you mean to suggest there are men in the service who hold the palms of their hands—"

It was the girl's turn to laugh ; high and clear was the sound of her merriment in the night.

" If there are any others, it's just the one, and his name is Frost. There used to be Johnson—he was touchy, too, about the way he held his hands. But they retired him out of the service with two bullets in his thigh and a pair of crutches for pension. Yes, and there was Peters, poor boy ! Him that chanced to fall over the cliff at Gwinwithian one night—not looking where he was going."

" I thank God, ma'am," said Theophilus, " that I am not a timid man. I thank Him also," he added, wiping his lips, " that I am

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no longer a hungry one. And I thank you, too. But—"

"*Listen!*" she said urgently.

There were the sounds of steps, the steps of several persons, crunching down the shingly way from the track above the cove.

"Ah!" said Frost, and drew his hanger. "Your friends, I suppose, ma'am?"

"No friends of mine, at this hour and place. No. The tinners more like. Get in the barn."

"But—"

"Into the barn with you! I'll not see my victuals wasted inside a dead man. Now then, stand back—away from the door. Give yourself room." She fumbled in the darkness, clearly knowing where to look, and stood up poising something in her hand. It was a heavy skillet pot with a long handle.

"It 'tis the tinners," she whispered, "it will be the barn they seek. See, I'll stand here in the shadow behind the door with this pot, and I can maybe fetch the rogues a clout or two as they come in. The rest is with you. 'Tis in earnest, man. These lads have blood enough on their hands not to worry over a little more. Steady now! —And quiet."

The crunch of boots came nearer, a portentous sound. Then suddenly the shadow of a man stood in the doorway. But only for a second. With a sound like a bell Dolly Trevathick's pot rang on his crown. A second man leapt forward, shouting. This time the pot rushed upwards from the end of its last swing and clanged against his chin. He went over backwards, limbs spinning like wheel spokes.

And then, hot with a fierceness new to him, Frost vaulted over the bodies and fell, his hanger flickering in the moonlight, upon the two who were still outside the barn and chased them down the slope to the cove, where one rushed headlong into the English Channel. The other feeling the hanger nick his buttocks and the warm blood run, gave himself up for dead and fell on his face on the turf, where he presently lost consciousness—but only from the liquor he carried, for he had set out drunk.

Hotfoot back to the barn went Theophilus, triumph and pride ringing in his soul. The girl had lit the lantern and—the wonderful tenderness of womankind!—was loosening the neck gear of the men that lay at the barn door and wetting their foreheads with dregs from the can of ale. Pity wasted on the murderous scum, thought Theophilus, but then he caught sight of the pale and blooded face, thin nosed and sharp jawed, of the man who lay nearest the door—and the triumph and pride drained out of him like water out of a cracked jug.

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It was the face of Mr. Carnarvon, his chief.

The girl gave him a wicked smile which did nothing to comfort him. Mr. Carnarvon groaned and stirred. Then the girl said gently, "Leave me the handling of this, Mr. Frost. And you may thank providence for one thing."

Theophilus had no desire to stay. He wished to be as far away as his feet could carry him and actually set out to get there, but thought better of it, and sadly squatted in the shadows outside the door, where the lantern light came through the chinks of planking upon him, and where he could hear what passed within.

What he did hear astonished him.

The fuddled maunderings of Carnarvon and his colleague as they came round were to be expected—but how was it Carnarvon knew Miss Trevathick and recognized her instantly? Frost was not surprised by the explanation Carnarvon gave for his presence—"I had word from the military that that young jackanapes Frost was stuck here in circumstances likely to cast ridicule upon the service."—Nor his saying, "They'll send us curates next to keep the coast with." But why did he also say: "'Twas not friendly in your father, Miss Trevathick, even if the boy is a fool"?

All this Carnarvon said with groans, while wake enough to answer questions but not yet to ask them. When he did muster strength to ask, Miss Trevathick's answers even more greatly astonished the listener.

"So it's fool and young jackanapes," she said. "And you dare to speak thus of the man who saved your lives!"

"Eh?" said the men on the floor, both together.

So she told them. First about the burst barn and the unguarded furniture. "And after that he had a talk with my father and the outcome was he chanced to find four tubs of liquor in the Cuddy Hole." This was news to Theophilus, like much else he was to hear.

"Ah," said Carnarvon expressively.

"But we had information," said the girl. "'Twas as good as a wreck to the tinners, this barn—and the kegs, too—and we had no hands, you see, for they're all afloat or in Truro."

So the brave young man had volunteered to watch both kegs and furniture, alone, and out of gratitude Dolly had taken him out some victuals, which he ate by the Cuddy Hole. He had barely finished when they heard oaths and blows from the barn, whereupon, racing up blade in hand, Frost had found Carnarvon's party being knocked flat by an ambush of tinners who were already going through their pockets—

"'Twas little I could do," said Dolly, "weak woman as I am, but Mr. Frost fell upon the rascals with only that nail-paring pocket knife of his and drove them before him like cattle. Like as not they

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turned, in the end, for they had the numbers, and he has not come back, so I fear for him. But sit you still; you are neither of you fit to swat flies."

And now the other two of the party stumbled back into the barn, nearly treading on Theophilus as they passed. The one from whom sea water dripped said he had been set on by two men from behind while engaging a third, and had been flung sixty foot into the sea from Stag Rock and that he owed his life to its having been high tide—which, as a matter of fact, it wasn't, not by four hours. The other, between liquor and blood letting, could say little, except that it took three men more than half an hour to beat him finally to his knees.

There was so little truth in the air that Theophilus felt it was not for him to presume to frankness. Indeed, he went farther. He rolled down his left stocking and deliberately wounded himself a little below the knee. He dappled his shirt, forehead, sword blade and leg with blood and dirt, threw away his hat, and cocked his wig over one ear. Considering this make-up was carried out in darkness it was tremendously effective when he finally made his dramatic entrance, crying—

"Mr. Carnarvon, are ye safe?—Is any hurt?"

Two hours later the moon had risen and had paved a quicksilver road across the sea, bright as the way to Paradise. Mr. Carnarvon's party were having their wounds patched and maybe discussing other things at old Sam's farmhouse beyond the cove. Everyone had perhaps forgotten that the tinners might return. Even Theophilus Frost and Dolly Trevathick, who still sat on the turf outside Bengal Barn and watched the glittering ocean lane stretching like hope across the night.

Theophilus knew it all now. He knew about the three hundred barrels in the cellars, and he knew that the four tubs in the Cuddy Hole were just one of those things Revenue men held the palms of their hands out backwards for. And it made him miserable.

"'Tis not my way, Dolly," he said. "I shall resign the service. I am a man that has to strive and I will not think myself a man if I do not strive. Maybe 'tis a wise thing and saves a deal of bother and bloodshed, this holding of hands out backwards; but 'tis a kind of charity I would sooner give than receive. There is somewhat less shame on your side of it than ours."

"Oh, we strive," she said. "For sure we do. Behind the plough on bright mornings, afore the mast on dark nights. No shame to us, Mr. Frost, I promise you. And it's true we're woefully short-manned, what with young Pengarron being pressed and Joe Fork marrying out of us to Port Isaac, and Black Andrew sick. Indeed, if ye have a thought of striving, Mr. Frost, it's likely the

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Trevathicks could find ye some opportunities, if I but say the word."

"Turn smuggler, eh? And damme if I haven't more than a mind to hold you to it! But why do you take such a powerful amount of trouble with me, Dolly? Tonight you had me ruined and beaten, there in the barn. You had Frost, the least liked of all those with bright buttons disgraced beyond hope. But you lied nobly for me, lied like an angel. But why, Dolly Trevathick? Why?"

"When I told you to leave me the handling of it, I said you had to thank providence for one especial thing, Mr. Frost."

"And what was that?"

"I am not so very sure. Perhaps it will be the way your nose turns up at the end. Or maybe it is the time you take about a smile, as slow as sunrise. Or maybe—no, I cannot tell what it is."

"I have a very good mind, Miss Trevathick," said Theophilus Frost, moving nearer to her, "to kiss you on those lips that lie so beautifully."

She kicked farther away, with a clang, the heavy skillet pot that lay beside her feet.

"Mr. Frost!" she said. "I am only a weak woman, and I am alone and defenceless! You would not take advantage of my helplessness—surely you would not!"

But the corruption of Theophilus Frost was complete. He had no scruples left, at all.

* * *

OLD HAND

The captain of a freighter took on two new hands, one a Kirkcaldy man without a letter of recommendation, the other a man from Dundee possessed of abundant documentary evidence as to his honesty.

They had not been long at sea when they encountered rough weather, and the Dundee man, crossing the deck with a bucket in his hand, was swept overboard. The Kirkcaldy man saw what had happened and leisurely sought out the captain.

"Dae ye mind yon man frae Dundee," he said, "that ye engaged, wi' the fine character?"

"Yes," said the captain. "What of it?"

"He's awa' wi' yer bucket."

Told by Bennett Cerf

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GEORGE ST. GEORGE'S LOCKET

"A queer coincidence, that," suggested the Duke uneasily

by NORMAN EDWARDS

GEORGE ST. GEORGE lowered his bulk into an armchair close to the fire and smiled amiably at his friend the Duke of Rustington. "A good dinner, Harry," he murmured. "Quite a good dinner. I must say this club does one proud."

The Duke of Rustington sat down opposite his friend and spread his hands before the fire. "Nice change to hear you express approval of your fodder," he commented. "Fact is, only half a dozen members were dining here tonight, so there was plenty to eat. You wouldn't have fared so well if there had been a full house."

"That's what I thought when you suggested we dined out tonight," admitted George St. George. "I've noticed before that when it's a foul and wet or foggy night, very few members seem to feed here."

The duke looked at the satisfied smirk on his friend's red face and clicked his dentures in exasperation. "I wondered why you suggested my club for dinner," he muttered. "Counted on a poor attendance, I suppose—and bigger helpings in consequence?"

George St. George gravely nodded his head. "And I was right, wasn't I? Better than sharing your meat ration at home; and that bottle of Chambertin wasn't half bad."

"The bill was," snarled his friend. "That bottle was one of eighteen still left in the cellar, and it cost . . ."

George St. George raised a plump white hand in protest. "Really, Harry," he observed, "as I am your guest I think you might spare me the embarrassment of listening to your complaints about the bill."

"Can't understand why you won't let me put you up for membership," expostulated the Duke. "There's a chance—just a chance—that I could whip up enough support to get you elected."

George chuckled, and a genuinely amused twinkle momentarily flickered in his narrow eyes. "I doubt that, Harry," he confessed

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with unusual candour. "I doubt not your influence here, but I do doubt the possibility of there not being far too many black balls when my name came up for consideration before the election committee."

"Besides," he went on, "I *like* coming here as your guest. It gives me great pleasure."

"I'll bet it does," muttered his friend. "No entrance fee and no subscription—and guests, being guests, are not allowed to spend a penny."

The broad grin on George St. George's face resolved itself into a happy smile as the door of the small smoking room opened, and old Nicholas, the club's patriarchal steward, entered.

"Brandy, I suppose, George?" queried the duke. George inclined his head in courteous acknowledgment of his host's successful supposition, and then smiled kindly at old Nicholas.

"Good evening, Nicholas," said George. "I am glad to see you looking so fit in this beastly weather."

Old Nicholas bowed slightly, and his white hair shimmered in the glow from the fire. He was a handsome old man of seventy odd and had served the members of the duke's club for more than fifty years.

"Good evening, Mr. St. George," he replied in his soft voice. "Thank you, I am well; and I hope you are, sir?"

"Thanks, Nicholas," said George. "Fairish, fairish to . . ."

"You're in rude health," cut in the duke, "and no doubt you will be in even ruder health after some brandy."

"The Courvoisier, your grace?" asked old Nicholas.

The duke nodded. "Yes, please, Nicholas. By the way, was that General Blythe I saw in the hall just now?"

"Yes, your grace."

"Give him my compliments, will you, and ask him if he'd care to join us here and drink brandy."

"Yes, your grace. That will be three brandies, then. Thank you, your grace."

The duke nodded and smiled fondly at the back of old Nicholas as he walked slowly out of the room. "A good servant," he remarked to George St. George. "They don't make 'em like that any more. More's the pity."

George St. George stretched his legs and sighed. "You're quite right, Harry," he agreed. "I've thought for a long time that this club of yours is the last stronghold of the good servant. I hope your fellow members conduct themselves with due decorum and don't let the staff down. After all, if a fine old chap like Nicholas is not to be seen in clubs any more, the manners of members will simply cease to exist . . ."

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The duke was about to tell his friend to refrain from pomposity, when General Blythe came into the room. After being introduced to George St. George, he lowered himself slowly and carefully into a deep armchair. He was an old man, but spare in build and lean of face. He carried himself stiffly when on his feet; but when he sat down one knew that he was feeling his age, because then his body sagged. But his eyes were alert in expression; and his voice had no suspicion of a quaver when he spoke. He seemed to be glad of company; and he accepted a cigar from the Duke of Rustington with evident pleasure.

"Thanks," he said. "Always glad to get a Hoyo de Merito offered to me."

George St. George also accepted his host's offer of a cigar. He peeled off the band, and then pulled out one end of the thin watch chain that coiled snakily across his Falstaffian abdomen. The end of the chain was attached to a cigar cutter and piercer, a small gold pencil, and various other odds and ends. George detached his cigar contraption from the chain and civilly offered it to the general; and when the general had done with it, to his host.

"Lot of junk you carry on the end of your chain," commented the duke. "Enough stuff there to set up a pawnbroker's annexe."

George St. George accepted his cigar contraption back from the duke and devoted himself to piercing his cigar, and then to lighting it. Only when this ritual had been completed to his satisfaction did he pick up the end of his watch chain and glance idly at the trinkets that dangled from it. "Keepsakes and what not," he remarked carelessly. "Nothing of any real value."

"Or you'd have sold 'em," chuckled the duke. "What's in that locket? Unusual design. May I see it?"

George St. George looked up at his host with a rather peculiar expression on his red face. The duke noticed it because he had not seen that particular expression for a good many years: it was an expression which suggested not only intelligence, but sensibility. For a moment the duke felt ashamed. Rather apologetically he said: "Of course, old boy, if . . . if it's—er—something—er—personal, something—er—er . . ."

The duke nearly said "sacred," but stopped himself just in time. He had fagged for George at Eton and he knew jolly well that he would be going a bit too far if he indulged in such a sentimental remark.

But George St. George lowered his eyes from his friend's ducal features to the locket, and a rather troubled look fought a losing battle with his usual appearance of boredom. His fingers twiddled with the locket as if they were behaving independently of his conscious will. And, suddenly, the locket was free from the chain,

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and swung precariously between George's thumb and first finger of his right hand.

The duke was still wondering whether he had made a *faux-pas*—he thought, actually, that the locket contained a miniature of one of George's aunts; especially the aunt who had left George five hundred a year before she found him out and died before altering her will—when the door opened, and the steward came in with three balloon glasses and a rather impressive looking bottle of brandy.

The three glasses having been generously charged, and the steward having bestowed on all present a beneficent smile, General Blythe swirled his glass in his knobbly old hands, sniffed long and loudly at the resultant aroma, smiled and nodded at the duke, muttered some queer formula; and then sipped. The duke and George did likewise; and the duke felt amply rewarded for his extravagance when he saw the respectful and devotional glow that came into the eyes of George and the General.

"Not bad," muttered the duke after his first tentative sip; and then he felt foolish. An Englishman may be permitted the license of an understatement, and an English duke might understandably be allowed special license, but the Duke of Rustington knew very well that he had been guilty of a cheap remark: the brandy was superb.

"You know, Harry," said George St. George, as he put his glass on a side table, and allowed the locket to slip into the palm of his hand, "you know, I'd forgotten all about this—this thing until you remarked on it just now."

"Really?" answered the duke cautiously.

George St. George nodded. "Yes," he said, slowly and ponderously. "Yes. I've carried the thing on this chain for—well, for a good many years. It belonged to my guardian—a great friend of my father's. When the guv'nor died he more or less adopted me."

General Blythe gave George a smile. "I understand," he said. "I've got a ring my father gave me. Can't wear it these days. Rheumatism. But often, when I see that ring, I think of the guv'nor . . ."

George St. George looked—for him—diffident. "I didn't quite mean it—that way, general. You see, this locket . . . well, it's not a family thing. It's—it's a bit of a curiosity. And a damned queer one at that."

The Duke of Rustington looked keenly at his gossip-writing friend. He knew George better than anyone else alive. He knew George's technique in starting some fantastic tarradiddle of a story; and he knew—or thought he knew—that puzzled, child-

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like look of innocence that George could assume when he wanted to capture the attention of an audience.

"Go on, George," invited the duke in a winning voice. "Go on, old boy. What's so queer about—about that trinket?"

George took a quick gulp at his brandy before answering. And when he did there was a surprising absence of levity in his fruity voice. "You see," he said, "this locket thing has no—er—intrinsic value. Actually, it's just a trumpery locket with a glass face. No Cosway miniature, or any arty business inside. Just a few strands of red hair. Lady's hair."

The Duke of Rustington suppressed a grin. He sat back and prepared to listen to an amusing anecdote about the love life of George St. George's guardian. And knowing George, the duke had every right to his sensation of anticipatory glee. "Go on, old boy," he encouraged his friend and guest. "Go on. All in strict confidence, of course."

But George St. George sat silent for an unconscionable time, staring abstractedly at the locket that rested in the palm of his hand. But at last he gave tongue. "You see," he began—he always began a story in an original way—"you see, the hair in this locket once belonged to a girl who was murdered."

The general gave a start; but the Duke of Rustington was unmoved: George had many conversational opening gambits, and the duke knew all of them. Or nearly all of them. But he nodded approval at George. "Go on," he muttered. "Go on, George. A good start."

"It's a good many years ago," continued George in a low voice. "In fact more than fifty years ago, at least. My guardian had a bit of money in those days—it was before Pools had caught on, you know—and as he was a bit lame, and couldn't do his bit in the Boer War, he lived in the country and bred horses."

"What sort of horses?" interrupted the duke, a note of special interest creeping into his voice.

"Losing horses," answered George sombrely. "But they were nice horses. I used to ride some of 'em when I was a kid—yet, somehow, they never could run very fast. Anyhow, not fast enough. Well, I suppose I was about five years old when it happened—the murder, I mean; but y'know, I shall never forget the night it happened, because it was my birthday, and I'd been allowed to stay up late."

"How late?" asked the duke idly. He was looking and feeling a bit bored by now.

"Oh, until after dinner," answered George; "but of course, one dined early in those days, and I don't suppose I went to bed later than nine-thirty."

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"And you were—how old did you say?" queried General Blythe mildly.

"Five," said George. "Nearly six, as a matter of fact."

The General looked at Rustington, and his eyebrows moved a little. The duke shrugged his shoulders and grinned. "Did you enjoy the port, George?" he asked. And he was not very surprised when George nodded and said: "Only half a glass, Harry. But it was the best Cockburn I've ever had in my life." He sighed heavily. "Only half a glass," he muttered, as if to no one in particular, "but, o'course, I was only a kid. My guardian was strict."

George St. George finished his brandy and maintained a pointed silence. The duke reached for the bell-push. Reassured by his friend's gesture, George smiled sweetly, and continued his tale.

"I suppose I'd been asleep for quite a while," he said, "when I heard the bell clanging at the lodge gate, and then—minutes later—my guardian yelling for our butler to put his trousers on and—er—investigate. The butler slept soundly; but the chap at the lodge was stone deaf, so it was always up to the butler when my guardian had a late visitor."

George smiled secretly. "And that was pretty often," he murmured roguishly. "He was a widower. And very popular with the ladies."

He paused dramatically, and then—as old Nicholas came in answer to the bell—he said shortly: "That's all I heard. I must have gone to sleep again almost at once. But next morning I heard from one of the grooms that a girl who lived in the village nearby had been murdered, and that . . ."

George paused as old Nicholas, in response to a nod from the duke, slowly re-charged the brandy glasses. Indeed, he was so slow that the duke frowned a little, and looked anxiously at the old man. "You feeling all right, Nicholas?" he asked solicitously. Nicholas bowed. "Indeed, yes, your grace," he said. "Thank you, your grace, quite all right." He smiled a little. "But I'm not so young as I was, your grace. Nerves a bit uncertain."

General Blythe nodded understandingly. "You get to bed, Nicholas," he growled. "I know about nerves; and you're older than I am."

"Thank you, sir," said Nicholas. And then, as an afterthought, he said: "Only a year, general."

"Quite," snapped the general. "But you're still too young to have nerves . . ."

Old Nicholas chuckled at the joke and bowed, and moved

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towards the door. "You see, gentlemen," he said in apology, "as I came in I couldn't help hearing Mr. George St. George use the word 'murder.' And that always upsets me. It sort of—of slows me down."

"Oh, I see," said the duke gently. "But why, Nicholas?" he asked. "Murder's pretty common—especially these days."

Nicholas blinked and suddenly looked very old indeed. "Yes, your grace," he conceded, "yes. Very common. Ugly times we live in, your grace. I hope murder never comes your way."

George St. George had a coarse sense of humour, and he giggled. But it was a very subdued giggle, for Nicholas looked at him reprovingly. "You see, sir," he said—and so softly that his voice was barely audible, "my only sister was—was murdered."

The door closed softly behind him. And for some time George and the duke and the general were silent. But at last the duke spoke. "Queer coincidence, that," he said uneasily. He looked sourly at George St. George. "I don't think I'm going to like your story, George. Hope there's not a lot of it."

"There isn't," said George with unwonted candour. "All I know is that a great friend of my guardian's had pulled our lodge bell late that night on my birthday, and had begged for help."

"Why?" asked the duke impatiently. "Hard up, I suppose?"

"No," snapped George. "He'd killed a girl. The girl in the village. She—she'd proved unfaithful. He—my guardian's friend—had caught her—er—*flagrante delicto*—and had killed her."

"How?" asked the general.

"How?" asked the duke.

George sighed and sipped at his brandy. "It's a sordid tale," he answered in a sulky voice. "The girl was no *good*. No good at all. Red heads are often like that. Too many boy friends. And so this pal of my guardian's, well, he lost his temper. You see, the—er—intruder . . ."

"The who?" asked the duke.

"The chap who—er—was betrayin' my guardian's friend," floundered George. And he really did flounder; for once in his life George St. George was telling a story badly. "The chap scuttled. Jumped out of a window, or something. So the girl took the—er—brunt of it."

"What happened?" queried the duke, who was not so bored as he looked.

"He took her by the throat," muttered George, "and shook her. That's all. But she fell down dead. Just like that. Dead at his feet."

The Duke of Rustington threw the end of his cigar into the fire and frowned. "Strangled her, you mean," he said sharply.

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"Not exactly," said George. "What I mean is this chap didn't *actually* kill her."

"All this is very involved," interrupted General Blythe gently. "You say this girl was murdered, and yet . . ."

"And what's that locket got to do with it?" butted in the duke. "Really, George, you're making a mess of this yarn."

"What I mean is," almost shouted George, "is that at the inquest it was proved that the girl suffered from a disease of the thyroid gland. The slightest pressure on her throat would have caused a heart attack and death. '*Status Lymphaticus*' the medical chap called it."

"So your guardian's friend was not a murderer after all?" queried the General. And George nodded. "No," he said grumpily. "But all the same, that night, when he came to our place, and asked my guardian to help him—well, he *thought* he was. And my guardian did help him. Helped him with cash; helped him clear out of the country; helped him escape a trial and publicity and—and disgrace, and all that."

"Decent of him," admitted the duke. "That's what I call friendship."

General Blythe looked frowningly into the fire. "Yes, I suppose so," he said slowly. "But it's—it's not a nice story."

"Definitely not nice," agreed the duke. "And," he went on, "I still don't see the connection between the locket on the end of your watch chain, George, and this—this cheap version of *Cavalleria Rusticana*."

"Who?" asked George. "Who?"

"An opera," said the duke gently. "Not a chap. An opera. By Mascagni."

"Mascagni?" asked the general in a surprised voice. "I thought a feller named Leoncavallo . . ."

George St. George finished his brandy and stood up. "I think, Harry," he said, "I'll go home. I'm tired."

The duke looked with amazed concern at his old friend. "But . . . but, George," he stammered, "it's . . . it's only half-past eleven . . ."

"I'm tired," repeated George obstinately. "Thanks for the dinner, Harry—and the brandy."

"But that locket," persisted the duke. "What's that got to do with . . ."

George St. George tugged at his watch chain and let the locket dangle again in the palm of his fat white hand. He sighed. "My guardian," he said, "left this with—with other personal effects. I'm damned if I know why I've kept it all these years."

George St. George suddenly wrenched the locket off the chain

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and threw it into the fire; and with a nod to Rustington, and a courteous half bow to General Blythe, he walked quickly out of the room.

The Duke of Rustington watched his old friend depart in silence, and with a look of such concern on his face that the general touched his sleeve.

"He *can't* be tight," exclaimed the duke in a voice laden with incredulity. "He can't be. No cocktails! Chambertin—yes; but only two brandies . . ."

"Quite sober," agreed the general.

He looked at his dead cigar, and sighed. He was hard up; and he had enjoyed that Hoyo de Merito.

"Beats me," muttered the duke. "Beats me—utterly. George—to clear off to bed—and only two brandies!—at eleven-thirty."

"A sudden revulsion of feeling, I expect," muttered the general.

"What do you mean?" asked Rustington in amazement. "Revulsion of feeling? George has no feeling."

"I think he has," said General Blythe. "You see, even George realized that his guardian was a dirty dog . . ."

"A dirty dog, general!"

"Yes," snapped the general. "He betrayed his friend by fooling about with that red-head. That's evident. But what puzzles me is how the fellow—he was lame, you remember—how the deuce the fellow jumped out of that window and got back to his house before the friend he had betrayed began ringing the lodge bell."

* * *

PIPE DREAM

Colonel Sartoris Beauregard Munchausen, of the Berkshire branch of the celebrated family, declared that his mare Honeysuckle was the greatest racehorse of all time. The Colonel, with a far-away look in his eyes, would puff clouds of contemplative smoke, and reminisce. "I remember, suh, a race of sixteen thoroughbreds in which my mare Honeysuckle participated. The stake was enormous.

"Well, suh, Honeysuckle was leading the field, which was no surprise to me, when on the back stretch, I noticed her hesitate. And then and there she produced a foal! I didn't know she was foaling."

At this point someone in the audience would sympathize, and say "Bad luck to lose a race that way!"

"Who said anything about losing?" the Colonel would conclude. "Honeysuckle *never* lost. She had her foal. Then she won the race by five lengths."

"And," he added, "the foal came in second."

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BACCHANALE

O Good Ale, thou art my Darling!

Seamen three! What men be ye?
Gotham's three wise men we be.
Whither in your bowl so free?
To rake the moon from out the sea.
The bowl goes trim. The moon doth shine.
And our ballast is old wine—
And your ballast is old wine.

Fear ye not the waves that roll?
No: in charmed bowl we swim.
What the charm that floats the bowl?
Water may not pass the brim.
The bowl goes trim. The moon doth shine.
And our ballast is old wine—
And your ballast is old wine.

THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK, 1785-1866

Safeguard

Oh! that second bottle, Harry, is the sincerest, wisest and most impartial downright friend we have; tells us truth of ourselves and forces us to speak truths of others; banishes flattery from our tongues and distrust from our hearts, sets us above the mean policy of court-prudence which makes us lie to one another all day for fear of being betrayed by each other at night. And, before God, I believe the arrantest villain breathing is honest as long as that bottle lives . . . I have seriously considered one thing, that of the three businesses of this age, Women, Politics and Drinking, the last is the only exercise at which you and I have not proved ourselves arrant fumblers. If you have the vanity to think otherwise, when we meet let us appeal to friends of both sexes, and, as they shall determine, live and die their drunkards or entire lovers. For, as we mince the matter, it is hard to say which is the most tiresome creature, loving drunkard or the drunken lover.

EARL OF ROCHESTER, *in a letter to* Harry Savile,
June 22nd, 1679

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" Some people go to a lot of trouble about costume," Archie Cannon said.

" He doesn't," Mike Maloney said. " What do I owe you ? "

Archie Cannon wrote out the bill and Mike Maloney produced his wallet.

Archie said. " Has he got a licence ? "

" To shoot ? " Mike Maloney said. " He hasn't got a licence to eat, but damned if I don't admire him sometimes. He must know something to be so sure of himself and so contemptuous of everybody else."

" To tell you the truth," Archie Cannon said, " I thought you were kidding, Mike. I thought you were kidding the way you sometimes do in court when you're helping a small man fight a big company. I didn't expect you actually to buy a gun and turn it over to an eleven-year-old boy. Are you sure it's all right ? "

" Of course it's all right," Mike Maloney said. " You saw for yourself the way he held the gun." He counted out the notes. " That right ? " he said.

" That's right," Archie Cannon said. " I hope you know there's no pheasant to speak of anywhere near here. The Sacramento Valley is where the pheasant shooting is."

" Where are you going to be around, ten o'clock tonight ? " Mike Maloney said.

" Home, most likely," Archie Cannon said. " Why ? "

" Would you like to drop over to my house for a glass of beer around ten ? " Mike said.

" I'd like that very much," Archie said. " Why ? "

" Well," Mike said, " this is the way I see it : It's a quarter past five now. It'll take him about three minutes to hitch a ride with somebody going out to Riverdale, which is about twenty-five miles from here. That would take an average driver forty or forty-five minutes to make, but he'll get the driver, whoever he is, or she is, for that matter, to make it in about half an hour or a little under. He'll do it by being excited, not by saying anything. He'll get the driver to go out of his or her way to put him down where the shooting is, too, so he'll start in right away, or a little before six. He'll shoot until after dark, walking a lot in the meantime. He won't get lost or anything like that, but he'll have to walk back to a road with a little traffic. He'll hitch a ride back, and he'll be home a little before or a little after ten."

" How do you know ? " Archie said. " How do you even know he's going at all tonight ? He just got the gun, and he may not even know how to work it."

" You saw him make off, didn't you ? " Mike Maloney said. " He was off shooting. And you can be sure he either knows how

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to work the gun or will find out by himself in a few minutes."

"Well," Archie said, "I certainly would like to drop in for some beer, Mike, if you're serious."

"Of course I'm serious," Mike said.

"I suppose you want to have somebody to share your amusement with when he gets back with nothing shot and his body all sore from the powerful kick of the gun," Archie said.

"Yes," Mike said. "I want to have somebody to share my amusement with but not for those reasons. He may be a little sore from the powerful kick of the gun, but I think he'll come back with something."

"I've never heard of anybody shooting any pheasants around Riverdale," Archie said. "There's a little duck shooting out there in season, and rabbits, of course."

"He said pheasants," Mike Maloney said . . . "Here, better make it a little before ten, just in case."

"I thought you were only joking about the gun," Archie said. "Are you sure you did the right thing? I mean, considering he's only eleven years old, hasn't got a licence and the pheasant-shooting season doesn't open for almost a month?"

"That's one of the reasons why I want you to come round for some beer," Mike said.

"I don't get it," Archie said.

"You're game warden of this area, aren't you?"

"I am."

"All right," Mike said. "If it turns out that he's broken the law, I want you to know it."

"Well," Archie said, "I wouldn't want to bother about a small boy shooting a few days out of season without a licence."

"I'll see you a little before ten, then," Mike Maloney said.

He spent half an hour at his office, then walked home slowly, to find the house quiet and peaceful, the children in bed and his wife washing the dishes. He took the cloth and began to dry them.

"I bought him the best shotgun Archie Cannon had for pheasant shooting," he said.

"I hope he didn't make you too angry," Mrs. Maloney said.

"He did for a while," Mike said, "but all of a sudden he didn't, if you know what I mean."

"I don't know what you mean," Mrs. Maloney said.

"I mean it's all right, that's all," Mike said.

"Well, that's fine," Mrs. Maloney said. "But where is he?"

"Shooting, of course," Mike said. "You don't think he wanted a gun to look at."

"I don't know what I think now," Mrs. Maloney said. "You've

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FINDER OF LOST THINGS

She was suburban from her boots to her hat and umbrella, and yet—

by EDMUND CANDLER

"YOU were really impressed? And the thought-reading afterwards—someone found a thimble under the piano? In fact, you are beginning to believe there is something in it?"

Malaher stirred the whisky and lemon and sugar in the glass of his very young friend as he delivered himself thus ironically. We had been talking about spirits and savages all night when the arrival of this buoyant youth, with his pores all open to new experience, gave the conversation another lap. This happy young man was learning Arabic and surveying, and he came to Malaher sometimes for help. He had the zest of an Elizabethan, and four virgin continents to squeeze of their romance.

"Well, you see," the boy said as he flung his overcoat on the head of an Ovis Ammon, "I have never had any truck with that kind of thing before. But perhaps you don't believe in psychical research?"

Malaher smiled.

"I think I believe in the psychical part," he said. "I am not sure about the research. You get the best results among savages."

Malaher threw open the window and looked down on the Embankment Gardens and the double arc of light along the Thames.

"I was going to tell you about the case of an epileptic. Have you ever heard of a man called Waneless?"

"He goes in for big-game shooting, doesn't he? I remember his name. He got the first head of a takin shot by a European."

"That is the man. No, he was not the epileptic, but he is mixed up in the story. I came upon his tracks in one of the Mantze States in Sechuan on the Tibetan border. I was out after takin, too—ostensibly; but I didn't see the Roman nose of one the whole trek: Waneless kept me too busy."

"Waneless was killed, wasn't he?" the boy interrupted.

"You don't remember the story? It was before your time. Then I'll tell you."

Malaher pulled the window down. There was enough chill fog in the room to make us draw in our chairs to the fire. The

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boy had that tiptoe-for-adventure look in his eyes and the poise of his head which had first attracted Malaher.

"I met his sister first," he went on. "I was washing my feet in my tent when I thought I heard an English lady's voice, but put it down to an illusion like church bells in the desert. Then my orderly brought in a large square visiting-card with a black edge, and I read:

Miss Waneless

The Pines

I peeped through the chink in the fly and saw the skirts of the first white woman who had been within a hundred miles of Mishi Rhotang. I stuck my feet in socks and shoes and persuaded her to come in. In a few minutes she was in possession of the camp-stool and I was sitting on the edge of the bed.

"In spite of her composure, I felt that she was shy. She talked about the last two or three days of her journey and her misadventures, which she did not exaggerate. For a long time she gave me no inkling as to who she was, or why she had come. All I gathered was, that she had come straight to Mishi Rhotang from Charing Cross, and had never been out of England before.

"While I made tea I was wondering if 'The Pines' was at Wimbledon or Hampstead, or where. She was suburban from her boots to her hat and umbrella, and quite unchanged by circumstances. She looked like a denizen of the Stores. She might have come straight up in the lift out of the Tube. Her rather shapeless dark-blue cotton dress with white spots must often have passed from 'The Pines' to 'The Gables.'

"'Waneless'—'Waneless'! I kept repeating the name to myself, trying to remember where I had heard it.

"When the water had boiled and I had got out the jam and biscuits, she rose, as a matter of course, to pour out the tea. She always stood as if she had sunk in, and held her hands in front of her as if she were pressing something down. Her hair was combed straight back and parted and tied up behind. Her features and her figure were ample, though the lines were not clearly defined. Her walk was slow and deliberate. You could see that she would waddle if she hurried.

"I asked her where she had pitched her tent. She had not got one. She had heard there were inns, and she had been putting

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up in the most filthy bug-ridden hovels all the way from the Yangtse. I remembered that nearly a month before I had been driven into one by a deluge when I was a few hours ahead of my kit, and I had found the chinks and peepholes in the walls stuffed with leaves of the *Occult Review*. I asked the innkeeper who had put them there, and he said an Englishwoman who had left a day or two before. I imagined some hardened missionary, and let it pass out of my mind.

"Miss Waneless admitted that she found the Chinese 'trying'. I thought of the gaping herd that would follow her into the hovel. A white man in an inn is a bit of a show, but a white woman! It made me sick to think of the dirty inquisitive crowd. The planks in the wall did not meet anywhere. The rooms were built against intrusion, but not for privacy. She could bar them all right, but her movements would be watched. If she took out a hairpin there would be some guttural comment, followed by guffaws or whispering and spitting. This would go on till the early hours, and there would be constant shufflings all through the night for a place at the chinks. She could not hide from those curious eyes; the *Occult Review* would not be occult enough.

"Miss Waneless was a spiritualist, I discovered, and she had got some queer ideas in her head about a 'medium' in the Black Cap Monastery at Mishi Rhotang near my camp; but I did not find out about her trouble all at once. She was uncomfortably shy, and would not get to the point; I could not draw her out.

"Our desultory talk turned from inns to sport. She asked me if I had 'been successful in securing' a takin yet. She called it 'budorca', the local name. She had heard that they were 'very evasive creatures'. It was not till then that I connected her with the Shikari man who had passed through months before, and who had not been heard of since. I did not know that he was supposed to be dead, and that it had got into the English papers.

"'Are you any relation to the Waneless who was here shooting?' I asked.

"She pressed her hands more tightly into her lap and looked down on the ground. 'I want you to help me to find my brother,' she said. And I saw tears in her eyes.

"She did not believe that he was dead yet, but she had a presentiment that he was dying. She thought of him captured by wandering tribes and held up to ransom, or lingering somewhere in prison in the hands of fanatics. Torture was in her mind, I know, though she could not name it.

"I tried to reassure her, suggesting a dozen different things he might be doing—working through to Burma by Batang and Rima, or exploring the Lolo country. One would have no news of him there; he would be absolutely cut off. I asked her if she

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was sure he was not on secret service. I knew the Intelligence Department wanted to find out what the Chinese were doing on the Tibetan and Burmese frontier, and what control they had over the semi-independent border tribes. I was working for the Indian Government myself. The takin, of course, were by the way.

"But Waneless's journey was not even indirectly official. She had been taken by her friends at home to the India Office, the War Office, and the Foreign Office. He was not on any confidential service. Nothing had been heard of him in London since he had taken his passport.

"'He may be in Tibet in disguise,' I suggested. 'He may be in Lhasa now.'

"She shook her head sadly.

"'Or he might be doubling back through the great desert to Pekin.'

"'That would be like him,' she said. And she told me how desert literature had held him as a child. Even at school they called him 'Gobi and Shamo.'

"It was only by talking about her brother that I could draw her out of her shell; but to every suggestion she answered, 'He would have been heard of.' And I knew she was right. I had little doubt in my heart that he was dead. Everything had been done that was possible. The Chinese Government had expressed their concern; officials had been stirred up in the provinces; but there was no trace of him beyond the Mantze States. He had been last seen at Mishi Rhotang.

"That brought us back to the monastery and the 'medium.' I gradually discovered that she counted more on this drug-sodden, primitive epileptic than on all the machinery of State. She wanted me to go to the Gompa and take part in some kind of *séance*.

"It was something I said about a lost telepathic sense still traceable among primitives which opened her eyes to the possibility of my being sympathetic. We talked about the phenomenal transmission of news, and I told her of a case I had come across in the Malay States and another at Khanno. She had expected me to scoff at the idea of her yellow clairvoyant, and this had aggravated her shyness and hesitation in coming to a point. She expanded when she found that I was more open-minded about what she called 'spiritualism' than the stockbroking young men who left cards at 'The Pines.'

"I had seen some odd things among the dervishes, even in those days. Did I ever tell you about the Medicine Man at Bornu? Then there was the Danakil dervish at Ankober, and the djeb-djeb. The trance is brought on by a violent rhythmic shake of the head from left to right."

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Malaher stretched out for a totem on the pipe-rack, and balanced it on his palm as if he were going to put the little man through his paces, but laid it down on the floor. "He wants a joint in his neck," he said.

The boy had pulled an envelope out of his pocket and was scribbling on the back: "Bornu—Danakil—djeb-djeb," and looking hungrily at Malaher as if to say, "We will get that out of you another night."

"Still," Malaher continued, "it had never occurred to me to consult an epileptic black-cap lama professionally.

"They are the very lowest type, you know, a pre-Buddhist cult gathered into the fringe—a survival of the old *Sakti* worship. The Red and Yellow Caps hate them. They turn their prayer-wheels left to right, wear an offensive black head-dress, and give their idols blood.

"I had been up to the Gompa; it was a most repulsive shrine. You could imagine a blight or a murrain coming from it, but nothing healing or clean. I told Miss Waneless I would go with her, but not into the temple. No woman could face those idols and keep her self-respect. She should have her *séance* in the court-yard.

"She would have gone without me; she had the pluck; but I was bound to see her through. I did not trust her interpreter—a low-browed, lantern-jawed Chinaman from Shanghai;—and I had little faith in her errand, though I was no scoffer. It pleased her to find that I accepted some of her dreams as facts. We agreed on many points, only she called phenomena 'supernatural' which are really super-normal. It has always seemed natural to me that a mind thrown out of its normal state should possess super-normal faculties since it moves on a different plane, in a new dimension. Primitive people know this, and use artificial means to unhinge the waking consciousness. There is money in it—hence the Medicine Man and the Diviner."

"And the Pythian priestess at Delphi, didn't you say?" the boy interrupted.

Malaher nodded. "That is the modern theory—that they were all epileptic women. They inhaled some gas which spurted out of the rock."

"Confound your pathology!" I broke in.

"Let the illusions go," he said. "It opens many doors."

It wrinkles up the youth of the world, I thought. But as Malaher went on I knew that the spirit of Romance was still abroad.

"I called for Miss Waneless at three the next afternoon to take her to the monastery. She was housed in a deserted potash-

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burner's hut, which I had cleaned out for her. There is no inn at Mishi Rhotang.

"The black temple of the Bön-pa lamas is built on terraces down the hillside, one block above another, each with its idol-room and courtyard and colonnade and lamas' cells. In the distance the masts of the praying flags scattered among the golden roofs made me think of argosies at rest in some barbarous old-world harbour, and there were slabs of black marble above the lintels, and hanging black skins about the eaves, and chopped brushwood smeared with red earth like paint, supporting the roofs all round. Groups of lamas were standing outside; they turned and followed us. We threaded an inquisitive crowd. Miss Waneless became more composed; her steps became slower, she looked more trim and prim as we were sucked in. She did not open her lips all the way.

"They had spread mats for us on the lowest terrace; the epileptic was to descend from above. We found the black-caps assembled, and some shaven polls of other orders drawn there for the mystery show. It was a gala day. Their yellow robes made bright patches in the dingy crowd. Every eye was turned on us.

"It appeared that the diviner was not yet 'inspired'—or intoxicated, to speak more exactly. He might not descend for hours. 'He is not yet in the radiant state,' Miss Waneless explained to me quietly. She called her interpreter and we asked him questions. I learnt how they train their spirit-men; frighten them when they are children; frighten the epileptic mothers of them before they are born, half-starve them, and shut them up for months in the dark alone, and then feed them on burning chillies and *charas* and what-not, until they see spirits in their dreams, and do not know whether they are asleep or awake, or what is visionary or real.

"We must have been there an hour when there was a stir by the porch of the temple, and a sinewy young monk drew out the car which the epileptic was to enter—a kind of flimsy sentry-box with doors, built on three rough wooden wheels, two in front and one behind. Then a lane was made by the gate where we had come in, and we saw the temple buffalo approaching.

"It was an ancient beast, whose skin was all sockets, cracking with age and covered with a venerable down; and its eyes had an uncanny way of looking up when, by the poise of its head, they ought to be looking on the ground, and they were a bright, light forget-me-not blue, like a child's, as if the beast had preserved a new-born, inquiring innocence in his primeval wallow. They yoked the murky brute to the car and drove him into the middle of the courtyard, where he stood immovable. You could see the long grey lashes in the sockets of his eyes.

"Another hour passed, and they brought out a gross golden

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female idol, and put it in the car, with its back to the buffalo. The epileptic was not to ride alone.

"From time to time Miss Waneless called the interpreter and asked him when 'the sensitive' was coming. She referred to the loathsome savage all the while as 'the sensitive,' 'the psychic,' 'the medium.'

"'What do they call him?' I asked the man.

"'Hui-ma-mblen-Karpo.'

"'What does that mean?'

"'Finder of Lost Things.'

"I looked at Miss Waneless, and saw in the brightening of her eyes the triumph of an instinct confirmed. Then it entered my head for the first time that the epileptic might find her brother.

"She was saying something about the psychic when a lama came up to ask me if we would drink the monastery tea. I said 'No' politely, but vainly, for a monk with a face like a lichened gargoyle was already bearing down on us with cups. They brought us the inevitable Tibetan *tsamba* and brick tea, with butter and mutton-fat floating in it. I admired my companion's composure more and more. She lifted her veil, touched the broth with her lips, and restrained the muscles of her face. She might have been calling somewhere: from her shoes to the buckle in her hat she was pure Twickenham.

"The wild monks all round were staring at her as men in civilized countries look through glass at mummies and stuffed birds, but she was unmoved. It was odd to turn from that Mongol crowd to her plain, straight, stolid, equine face, honest and compassionate. There were dark rims under the eyes; the lashes were almost invisible, being the same hue as her skin; her hair had been a dull yellow, but there was grey in it. I felt strangely drawn to the woman, though there was nothing pleasing in her looks save her unalterable homeliness and her true eyes. You could see at a glance that she had faith.

"It was an interminable afternoon, and I dozed for very weariness. I was translated by my companion to the High Street and the trams, to Bushey Park and the iron gate in front of Hampton Court. The lamas receded with their peaked caps and praying-wheels, and Miss Waneless passed from shop to shop carrying a little green bag. She led a small, curly-haired dog by a string.

"It was almost dark when I was awakened from my reverie by a loud commotion, and heard her say, 'He is coming!' Some one fired a gun from the terrace over us, and the hubbub in the courtyard became a subdued drone. We heard demoniac cries and the clanging of doors above. We saw him sway like a drunken man into the verandah of an upper storey.

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" As he drew near us, a blare of wind-instruments, conch-shells, and a kind of horn blown within, deadened the sound of his coming. He appeared at the door of the idol-house, a young man, his head bare and cropped, his hide like loose wrinkled parchment clinging to the bones of his cheek—a peculiar unhealthy colour, the bright skin-yellow of the ball of the foot. He was crying out something, but the din of the instruments drowned his voice. He circled round the ring of monks, peering into each face with a vague searching look and passing on. He passed me by, but stood ten seconds in front of Miss Waneless, fixing her with strange intentness. She did not flinch, but gave him one direct glance. Then she held her knees tightly, and looked on the ground.

" The music quickened with a clash of drums and cymbals; the conches and horns wailed discordantly; the oracle broke into a slow rhythmic step, shaking his head from left to right, and revolving with outstretched arms. The old men behind headed him to the car as one might drive a goose into a narrow lane . . .

" When he entered the box it began to shake and sway; two voices issued from it; the buffalo plunged clumsily to the goad. The sinewy young lama ran beside to head the beast off the ring, so that the car, veering continually, passed under us again and again. As it plunged along behind the goaded brute, the old lamas shambled after it, their peaked caps bobbing to the din.

" Miss Waneless clutched me by the arm.

" ' Can they hear what the sensitive says ? ' she asked. And the catch in her voice was her one betrayal of emotion the whole afternoon.

" The oracle spoke in an unknown tongue: it was some dead cult of which he remembered nothing after the possession had passed. If it were not for the old priests who ran behind the message would be lost.

" It grew dark, and we saw two little points of light in the air in front of the car like a reflection in water of the beast's luminous eyes. Then the goad ceased to ply, the shriek of the conches expired, the car slackened and stopped. The lamas rushed to the box, opened it, and carried the unconscious soothsayer—wounded by collision with the goddess—into the temple. The golden idol was left lolling out of the door.

" We waited some time in suspense; our interpreter had followed in the rout and was lost. Every now and then a monk came and bawled something in our ears, and seeing we did not understand, bawled it louder, lowering his head like a bull. At last the lantern-jawed little man appeared and delivered us the oracle:

" ' He is alive, but near death. Go to the snow-peak beyond Romi Chungpo. Two hours after sunset look westward for a sign.' "

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" So far I had been humouring a child, but now my whole heart was in the business. Nothing mattered but the finding of Waneless. And Miss Waneless! Only a day or two before I had pitied her unattractiveness. Later I came to know that her stubborn obstinate look of having sunk in where she sat or stood, hid shyness and hesitation in little things, common in sensitive women who lack charm. In big things—like faith and grit and resolution—she was sure and firm.

" Before noon the next day we had started for Romi Chungpo. Miss Waneless would not lose an hour. She would not stay at Mishi Rhotang and let me make a reconnaissance ahead. It was a dangerous country to traverse—she did not know how dangerous. Three out of the eight white men who had entered it in the last ten years had been murdered; and on the third day we had to cross a tract of the Lolo country.

" Things were made easy at the start. I had friends among the local chiefs who had been out shooting with me and borrowed my guns. And I think Miss Waneless had made a good impression. Her largesse had been ample; she had approached their mysteries in a reverent spirit, and she possessed the stolid calm of one of their idols—a calmness invaluable in an errand like this."

Malaher paused and looked at the boy.

" You know," he said, " a man is safe almost anywhere if he can keep his temper, and a woman more safe."

The boy shuffled in his chair; his spurs were yet to win; he was wondering if his hot blood would stand the test.

" In the presence of a composure like that," Malaher went on, " violence is unthinkable. Miss Waneless would be safe among the Senussi. She could walk right through the Danakil country—or rather, she could be carried, and that requires pluck of another kind.

" I cannot tell you how stiff and awkward and clumsy she was. She had never played any kind of game. You could not imagine her leaving the pavement or high road; you would think a stile or a plank-bridge an insuperable barrier. Yet she got through somehow to Romi Chungpo; and the track was carried over torrents bridged by rotten logs, where there was a hundred-foot drop into the stream, and along the face of precipices where you balanced on slender pine trunks supported by pegs driven into crevices in the rock, or hanging by knotted vines from boughs above. I have no head for precipices myself, and I should have liked to have been dragged along by a rope if I had dared. It made me sick to see them carry Miss Waneless over.

" We would come to a place where the path ended, and some broken goat-track traversed a hanging cliff, when she would sit

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down and tie a ribbon of white lace round her skirt above the ankles for delicacy's sake. She had none of the clothes women wear for golf or shooting, tweed knickerbockers, puttees, nailed boots, and short skirts. She was dressed for the High Street and the Stores. But she had the knack of making herself stiff and unresisting, so that the little hill men could carry her across, one in front, and one behind, wheelbarrow fashion, with a foot in each hand. She shut her eyes and resigned herself. She seemed to will away fear and become marble. I shall never forget that sacrificial look.

"I would sit and wait my turn to traverse a narrow edge of rock above a chasm, watching the rickety procession cross—the closed, upturned lids of Miss Waneless, her tightly-shut mouth. I never realized so feelingly how indifferent the great and permanent forces of nature are to our midget lives. The unceasing roar of the torrent beneath was a cruel undersong.

"We reached Romi Chungpo without mishap on the sixth day; the peak was two days beyond. The roughness of the way made us forget the danger from the tribes. We crossed the Lolo tract unchallenged; the country was deserted; every male had been carried off on one of those perennial border frays against the neighbouring clans.

"At Romi Chungpo I tried in vain to persuade Miss Waneless to rest one day, or to let me go alone to the peak and decide on the spot what it would be best to do if I could find any trace of her brother. In the strain of the journey I had hardly thought about our goal. I do not think that it occurred to either of us that he would not be there, that we might not see his watch-fire after all. Then, when the tension had passed, I became sceptical. I forgot my belief; I told myself that I had come simply to let her feel that everything had been done that could be done. I wanted to humour her, to spare her.

"You can imagine what an ass I felt two nights afterwards when we were huddled in blankets in the snow at thirteen thousand feet, a storm gathering round us. Miss Waneless literally sank in; she sat gazing raptly at the west, and I cursed the Finder of Lost Things, and my own folly, feeling that we were in for a night's vigil, and that nothing could dislodge her. She must have divined my dwindling faith, for she said something about 'the lucidity of trance,' and repeated more than once, 'You see, he,' meaning the medium, 'was so near.'

"She was calculating his psychic power in the terms of a hertzian wave.

"I began to think about frostbite, and was rubbing my ears and burying my head in my Balaclava cap, when I heard her cry: 'There!' I looked, and far down in the valley I saw a little glow-

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worm flicker, which might have been a camp-fire. I had just time to get the bearings of it on my compass, when the clouds rolled down on us and we were lost.

"We descended with pain into the dwarf rhododendrons. Here the mist was thinner. We lighted a beacon and waved signal brands, but there was no answering gleam across the valley.

"The next morning we followed the bearings I had taken until we came to a torrent we could not cross. We knew the light we had seen must be beyond it, and spent the whole day looking for a ford. It was twilight when I saw the signal. I gave Miss Waneless the glasses and asked her what she could see. She focused the thing and said very quietly:

"'A bag hanging on a forked pole. It is like a finger-post pointing up the side ravine.'

"The glasses shook in her hand. It was Waneless's rucksack.

"We bridged the stream the next morning. I had taken plenty of rope, knowing the kind of country to expect. Miss Waneless was lowered on to a rock in the middle of the stream, where our stoutest little man stood; he paid the rope out, and she was hauled up the other side, looking like a saint in levitation. She did not shut her eyes—she was too happy to be afraid. At the foot of the pole we found the spoor of a booted man. A little way up the ravine I smelt wood smoke. I let Miss Waneless get ahead. Then I saw a shirt hanging on a bush to dry. I sat down and was tugging at a supposititious bootlace, when I heard a sob. Only in victory did she surrender. Then, as I retreated through the scrub, I heard a man's voice not unlike her own.

"'Just like you, Emma . . . sprained my ankle . . . Can't get after game . . . was feeling very low and humped.'

"I botanized assiduously for an hour. When I came back Emma was bandaging his foot. He greeted me with laconic warmth. You never saw such a wild man of the woods. He wore elfin locks; his coat was patched with bark. Emma got up as I entered the shelter and stood four-square to receive me, obviously under the impression that she ought to make some appropriate speech. She looked more than ever as if she had stuck in, as if she were pressing something down. I was afraid of some demonstration, and I think Waneless detected the springs of one. He came to the rescue with a ready wit, dwelling on the humours of his plight, bringing us down to a less emotional plane.

"We patched him up inwardly and outwardly. When his ankle had been bathed I cut his hair while he smoked—a tin of his own mixture: Miss Waneless had seen to that. I gathered his story in pieces.

"He had marked down a takin on the cliffs above the ravine and

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crossed the torrent in heavy rain, where two huge abutting rocks had jammed in the stream; but, before he could recross, the bridge had been carried away by a landslip. His Shikari was killed; he escaped himself by a miracle. He cut his way downstream through the dwarf rhododendrons, thick as a mesh, till he came to another torrent, which joined the first.

"He was shut in on both sides by impassable gorges: upstream the cliffs fell smooth and sheer, slippery as ice. There were no trees near the bank, and bridging was out of the question till the torrent had shrunk in winter. So he built up the old herb-gatherer's shelter in which we found him, and lived on the takin he shot—the meat kept well in the snow—and wild onions and rhubarb and honey and an occasional snow-trout.

"He made light of it, but I think he would have starved if we had not found him. He had sprained an ankle, and could not get about. He had no matches, and was afraid to trust to tinder in the rain. He kept his fire burning night and day, hoping that it might be seen. 'It was always in his thoughts,' Miss Waneless explained. 'He wished it desperately and prayed every day: "May some Christian see my fire!" I knew if only we could find a medium near enough . . .'

"Waneless gave her a gaunt smile.

"'Surely, Emma,' he said, 'you don't believe in that rubbish still.'"

Malaher rose and stretched himself and knocked the ashes out of his briar for a last fill. As he put the totem back on the pipe-rack he said to the boy, rather unkindly, I thought . . .

"You see, I am still open to conviction about psychical research."

* * *

QUEEN OF CLUBS

Three residents in a well known resort hotel were looking for a fourth for bridge. They came upon a little old lady peacefully knitting in the lounge and invited her to join them.

"Oh, but I don't play really well," she protested.

"Never mind," they overode her. "We're not experts either."

On the first hand there were three passes to the little old lady. She studied her hand, then in a bright voice announced her bid:

"Two clovers!"

This Week Magazine

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SECOND FIDDLE

"I must hear this incriminating music for myself," said the inspector

by JOSEPH WECHSBERG

I WAS charged with sedition and high treason under unusual circumstances one night when, as a young *Gymnasium* student, I was playing second fiddle in the quartet of Uncle Bruno.

My uncle was a paper salesman, but he hated paper—from Manila to onionskin. Music was his true vocation. He belonged to the sub-species of chamber-music addicts who are almost as bad as bridge or marijuana fiends. He played the violin, viola, cello, piano, clarinet, and French horn. This made him easily the most sought-after musician in my home town. Frequently a cellist or violinist would fail to show up at the last moment, whereupon the three stuck quartet players would SOS my uncle. He was always glad to oblige unless he was having his own quartet. He could take over any part at a moment's notice. He was so indispensable that the music-minded citizens didn't dare object to his temperamental ways. Looking back, I think Uncle Bruno was something of a local Petrillo.

He was a medium-sized man with hair that got thinner, and eyeglasses that got thicker, every year. He was kind-hearted, but when he played chamber music he became a dictator. He would curse his players, stamp the floor, and use his fiddle bow as a conductor's baton or as a riding whip. He didn't mind so much when somebody played a false note or got stranded during a prestissimo, but he would not tolerate lack of enthusiasm. He was contemptuous of musicians who became tired around midnight, after a mere five hours of playing Brahms and Hindemith. Uncle Bruno was responsible for at least two evictions. He had a theory that modern music should be performed in the early morning hours—a theory most landlords did not agree with.

Uncle Bruno, a bachelor, lived on the second floor of a big, old rambling house. His apartment consisted of a large music room and hardly anything else. The music room had been created by simply tearing down the walls between three smaller rooms. There was a kitchen and the maid's room, but no master bedroom. I have never been able to find out where my uncle slept when he felt tired, which

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happened infrequently. His energy was famed and feared. The music room had no rugs or curtains because they might swallow up the sounds. If people wanted to sit down on a chair, they first had to take off piles of Breitkopf & Härtel music scores.

Across the street was a police station. On warm summer nights the police inspectors on duty would move a wooden bench out in front of the station, take their beer glasses, open their high uniform collars, and listen to the music, sipping the beer. My uncle played a lot of Slavonic music—Smetana, Dvorák, Tchaikovsky, Borodin—which was very popular with the police. The inspectors never objected to my uncle's playing after 11 p.m., though this was against city regulations.

"They know that I'm the only tenant in the house," my uncle would say. "Besides, I'm contributing to all police charities. And they like my slivovitz."

The only people who revolted against music after midnight were the cooks. I'm saying "cooks" because there was a steady succession of Maries, Tonkas, Helenkas, Annas. All of them left after discovering that sleep was hard to get in my uncle's house. I remember one of them, a frail, skinny spinster named Hanka who made delicious bublaniny, an extra-light kind of sponge-cake filled with ground walnuts. I think Hanka's bublaniny were more popular among the local quartet-players than the latest compositions by Stravinsky and Castelnuovo-Tedesco.

One night we were playing quartets by Debussy and Dvorák and Smetana's beautiful "From my Life." Uncle Bruno played the first violin; I had only recently been admitted to his steady quartet as second fiddler. A prominent lawyer with a skull as bald as a billiard ball and a long black beard played the viola. The cello part was handled by a surgeon who had a reputation for removing ladies' appendixes without leaving anything but the "cutest little scars" on the bodies of his victims and, as a consequence, was much in demand.

We topped off the Smetana with a cacophonous quartet by a modern Lithuanian who didn't believe in melody or harmony. During the third movement, high-pitched staccato sounds came out of the cook's room.

"For God's sake, stop that noise!" she shouted. "Hasn't a person any right to sleep in this house?"

"Shame on you, Hanka!" my uncle shouted back, without getting up from his seat. "Calling this music noise just because the man is fifty years ahead of his time." He shrugged angrily. "If she weren't such a good cook, I would fire her for that," he said to us.

Out of the cook's room came muttered curses, then quiet. It was half past one. We finished off the Lithuanian, ate Hanka's remark-

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able bublaniny, and drank slivovitz. The surgeon took off his gold-rimmed glasses, kept his eyes closed while he cleaned his glasses with his necktie, put on his glasses and said, "This is a good night to play Haydn's *Emperor Quartet*."

I didn't fully realize the tremendous impact of this suggestion. The three men exchanged glances that had a sinister quality of conspiracy. There was a long pause. Then my uncle went to the open window, looked out, and proceeded to close both the outer and inner window.

This measure of precaution was no mere whim. Haydn's *Emperor Quartet*, opus 76, No. 3, was musical dynamite. Its slow movement, *poco adagio cantabile*, consists of variations on the melody Haydn composed in 1797 as the national anthem of the former Habsburg régime. That was bad enough; but the melody was also used for "Deutschland über Alles." When Austria-Hungary collapsed in 1918, the "Kaiserhymne" became verboten music in Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Yugoslavia. The singing and playing of the Kaiser anthem was forbidden by Czech law.

The viola-playing lawyer, a man not given to hasty decisions, stepped over to the window and looked at the police station across the street.

"Hmmm," he said, "the inspector on duty seems to be asleep."

He looked pleased. It wasn't news to me that the ranks of the town's chamber musicians were heavily infiltrated with monarchists and Haydn-minded fellow-travellers. Many of them were conservative lawyers, doctors, bankers, directors, who had seen better days under the Habsburgs.

Uncle Bruno unlocked the drawer of a Biedermeier chest, which he had never opened before, and placed the music on our desks. He had on many occasions come out strongly against the Habsburgs and the Restoration. He was an ardent follower of President Masaryk, but he liked to demonstrate that, above all, he stood for Freedom of Music.

The atmosphere was tense as my uncle gave the cue and we started to play. I felt like an anarchist about to light the fuse of a time bomb which would blow up the Czar's Winter Palace. Somewhere I heard a door being opened and closed, but none of the other players paid any attention. This was a great, dangerous moment in their chamber-musical lives.

A few minutes later—we were in the middle of the "theme with variations" based on the Kaiserhymne—I heard heavy steps on the stairway, the door was torn open, and Hanka, the cook, stood on the threshold. She wore slippers, a nightcap of white lace, and a dark chequered plaid over a long, pseudo-Victorian nightshirt.

"There!" she shouted to a man behind her, pointing an

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accusing finger at us. "Making noise at two in the morning! Robbing a poor woman of sleep! And playing the damned Kaiserhymne! High treason!"

She was shoved aside and Police Inspector Hájek came into the room. He was a heavy-set, red-faced man with a long moustache, the ends of which were curled up like violin keys. He had his uniform unbuttoned and looked sleepy and unhappy.

"Sorry, gentlemen," he said apologetically. "Playing the old anthem is a case of sedition and high treason. I'll have to investigate."

The lawyer's glossy skull took on a pale, mat finish. Even the surgeon, a man accustomed to grim tragedy, looked crestfallen. Only my uncle seemed thoroughly unconcerned.

"We're playing Haydn, not politics," said the lawyer. "We have played Smetana and Dvorák before," he added, by way of an extenuating circumstance.

"Haydn," the surgeon said, rubbing his glasses and putting them on again as if he were going to look into somebody's abdomen, "died a hundred years before President Masaryk and President Wilson started to work for the independence of the Czechoslovak Republic."

Inspector Hájek cleared his throat. I was sure he didn't know anything about Haydn and what it was all about. This was a delicate, serious matter. Several prominent citizens had been accused of sedition and high treason. Citizens who freely contributed to the Collection for Widows of Policemen Killed in the Course of Duty, and to the Police Force's Masquerade Ball. Citizens, incidentally, who happened to have the best slivovitz in town and who were not stingy with it.

Inspector Hájek drew a deep breath. "I will have to hear this for myself," he said, with a fine touch for worldly and divine justice. "Would you mind playing once more the incriminating part for me?"

"Not at all," said my uncle. "Sit down, Inspector."

The lawyer and the surgeon didn't say anything. They were probably wondering whether they would get single cells at the local court house or one together, which might at least enable them to play Mozart duets.

My uncle raised his bow, conductor-fashion, and said, "Gentlemen, the slow movement, C minor."

I looked dumbfounded. The slow movement happened to be written in the key of C major, not C minor, which is quite a difference. It was inconceivable that my uncle could have made a mistake. He nodded to us and began to play his private version of the slow movement, cleverly concealing the verboten Habsburg anthem behind a C minor smoke screen. The lawyer and the surgeon

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caught on after a few bars, playing also in C minor. Being a novice at that kind of musical cops and robber game, I contented myself with merely faking some extended pianissimo notes.

When the piece was over, my uncle put his violin down on the Biedermeier chest and took out a new bottle of slivovitz.

"Well, *pane inspektor*, you are a musical expert," he said. "Does that sound like the verboten anthem?"

The inspector's glance went from one player to the other. He seemed to be doing some hard thinking. Once he glanced at the bottle of slivovitz.

"I can't hear any similarity," he said at last. He turned to the old cook and shouted, "Get to blazes out of here before I have you arrested for attempted blackmail, disturbing the peace, offending an officer, moral turpitude, running round in indecent clothing, and causing a public annoyance!"

Poor Hanka stood there like Lot's wife, but my uncle walked towards her and saluted her with his bow—present arms.

"She did only what she thought was her citizen's duty, *pane inspektor*," he said. "I'm going to raise her salary from the first of the month. Have you tried her bublaniny? They're wonderful."

The bald lawyer mopped his skull and offered Hájek the plate of bublaniny. Hanka retired, a study in utter bewilderment. The surgeon grabbed a corkscrew, and with his expensive fingers opened the bottle of slivovitz. The inspector gulped down a big glass, smacking his lips to get the after-taste.

"Funny thing with those tunes," he said. "People always get mixed up. For a moment I wasn't so sure myself, to tell you the truth."

"Quite so," said my uncle. "Have another drink."

"Thanks," said the inspector, wiping his mouth with the back of his hand. "Good stuff. The way I look at such a problem is like this: Why should you gentlemen want to commit sedition? You just happen to love music. Correct?"

My uncle looked at him. For the first time I saw a smile on his face. "Correct, *pane inspektor*. And now, gentlemen, enough of this interruption. Sit down over there with the bottle, Inspector, while we finish the Haydn Quartet."

* * *

TOCSIN

Conscience is the inner voice which warns us that someone may be looking.

H. L. MENCKEN

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IF THIS BE LOVE

Cupid's our theme—and what heart can deny?

They had a happy evening with the *Sunday Gazette* on the morning after Fred's departure. "It seems to me," said Lily at the end of the 'Murray Case,' "the more good you are the more trouble you get into. So why worry?"

"Don't talk like that," said Jane. "If a girl gets into trouble it's as much her fault as the man's."

"Then why don't they say so in the papers?" asked Lily.

Jane did not know. Perhaps the message of the paper was much the same as that of the pictures—that wickedness was wrong and unsuccessful. And this, no doubt, was the intention of its good proprietors, two of them were noblemen. But this was not exactly the message it brought to the two daughters of the *Blackbird* . . .

"I'd like something terrible to happen to me . . . Ruined," she murmured, lying on the *Blackbird*'s deck with her feet waving behind her and her eyes on page sixteen. "I think it must be rather fun . . . You know all that stuff about the young man saving her from worse than death. Worse than death!" said Lily contemptuously. "Well, I don't believe it is."

Jane said nothing, but she decided, like the river-police, that something ought to be done about Lily.

A. P. HERBERT, *The Water Gipsies*

The Realist

Love's not so pure, and abstract, as they use
To say, which have no Mistresse but their Muse . . .

JOHN DONNE, 1572-1631

Conversation Piece

"Dearest!"

"Yes?"

"Dearest, *did* I seduce you?" Mrs. Pawle still looked very much worried.

"No, sweetheart, you didn't. And I don't think I seduced you, either."

"Well, then, how did *It* happen?"

"I suppose we seduced each other. No! It just did happen, quite naturally."

"Dearest . . ." Suddenly Mrs. Pawle buried her head in Alan's shoulder. "Eve's got a 'fession to make."

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"Has she?" Fondly Alan stroked the curls at the smooth nape.

"She left the bathroom door open on purpose."

"Good." Alan realized with a little shock of surprise that he had always known that Mrs. Pawle must have left the bathroom door open on purpose. He had not admitted the knowledge because she had intimated that it had been an accident.

"And . . . and . . ."

"Yes?"

"And when she came into your bedroom afterwards," said Mrs. Pawle, in a small voice, "she . . . she *hoped* something might happen."

"You darling!" Alan held her closely to him. He was much moved.

"I've always meant to tell you," Mrs. Pawle whispered, "because I do want everything to be quite honest between us."

"So do I, sweetheart. And it is. When did you begin to hope something might happen? As soon as you knew Fred was going to be away for the night?"

"No, no. Not till I was in my bath. Well, perhaps a teeny-weeny bit when we were in the drawing-room . . . and . . . oh, Alan, I did so want to do something for you. You know . . . to make the first time lovely for you."

"So you did, darling," Alan whispered, kissing her hair. "You did, my sweetheart."

"I've never done that with anyone else. I mean, been unfaithful to Fred. You know that, don't you, dearest?"

"I know."

There was a long silence. Alan felt closer to Mrs. Pawle than ever before. It was, he knew, a holy moment that he would never forget.

FRANCIS ILES, *As for the Woman*

Perhaps

Some lads there are, 'tis shame to say,
That only court to thieve,
And once they bear the bloom away
'Tis little enough they leave.
Then keep your heart for men like me
And safe from trustless chaps.
My love is true and all for you.
"Perhaps, young man, perhaps."

A. E. HOUSMAN, 1859-1936,
A Shropshire Lad

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All Seem to Know

Peering at her chamber the white crowns the red rose,
Jasmine winds the porch with stars two and three.
Parted is the window ; she sleeps ; the starry jasmine
Breathes a falling breath that carries thoughts of me.
Sweeter unpossessed, have I said of her my sweetest ?
Not while she sleeps : while she sleeps the jasmine breathes,
Luring her to love ; she sleeps ; the starry jasmine
Bears me to her pillow under white rose-wreaths . . .

Could I find a place to be alone with heaven,
I would speak my heart out : heaven is my need.
Every woodland tree is flushing like the dogwood,
Flashing like the whitebeam, swaying like the reed.
Flushing like the dogwood crimson in October ;
Streaming like the flag-reed South-West blown ;
Flashing as in gusts the sudden-lighted whitebeam :
All seem to know what is for heaven alone.

GEORGE MEREDITH, 1828-1909

Fate

Suddenly he was aware of the old flame shooting and leaping up in his body, that he had hoped was quiescent for ever . . .

" Shall you come to the hut ? " he said, in a quiet neutral voice.

And closing his hand on her upper arm, he drew her up and led her slowly to the hut, not letting go of her till she was inside. Then he cleared aside the chair and table, and took a brown soldier's blanket from the tool-chest, spreading it slowly. She glanced at his face, as she stood motionless.

His face was pale and without expression, like that of a man submitting to fate.

" You lie there," he said softly, and he shut the door, so that it was dark, quite dark.

With a queer obedience, she lay down on the blanket. Then she felt the soft, groping, helplessly desirous hand touching her body, feeling for her face. The hand stroked her face softly, softly, with infinite soothing and assurance, and at last there was the soft touch of a kiss on her cheek.

D. H. LAWRENCE, 1885-1930,
Lady Chatterley's Lover

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HOW LONG TO HOPE

He knew how it would be; it was bound to come in the end

by JULIAN WARD

WITHIN half an hour, at the most, James Cotton realized that he was dying. He did not know when he would die, nor even exactly how, but the knowledge came to him that his life was ending.

He became aware of it quite slowly. For a time he kept peering about him, hoping to find someone or something that would help him, but after a while he began to realize that his life must soon come to an end unless something happened.

The moment at which his life would finally cease was still, however, quite a distance removed from him. It did not yet touch him. Between him and it was still a little space of time, like a field hemmed about by fences, and so long as he stayed on one side of it and the moment of death on the other, he found that he was able to remain sane and without any overwhelming fear.

He was worried and afraid, but he still had a little in hand before really coming to grips with the problem of getting himself out through the dark doorway that leads from this world into the next, and so he was able to take stock of the situation and avoid giving way to panic.

He began to swim slowly in a direction which he believed to be westerly. He did this because he was nearer to the continent of America than to the continent of Africa. The fact that America was some seventeen hundred miles distant did not affect his decision. He had to swim towards something, and so he began to swim towards America. It was the only idea that, at that moment, he could bring his mind to tackle.

It was very dark.

As he swam he could see nothing but the glittering sheen of the water on either side of him, and that only for a few yards in each direction. The water was calm and smooth and sluggish, only rising now and again in a slow, surging heave which lifted him bodily for two or three feet and then laid him gently back in the flat, waveless expanse of water.

He wondered what time it was and how much longer the night

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would last. He thought, "Twelve o'clock when I went to sleep. About half past two when I woke up. Half past two . . . well . . ."

He swam on, pushing his way through the water with a slow breast stroke, and tried to calculate how long he had been there in the water. But in the end he decided that it did not really matter. It made no difference. He stopped swimming for a moment and listened instead. There was no sound at all. Even the sea itself was moving stealthily in the darkness, no murmur coming from its huge immensity.

He thought of the water going down beneath him, hundreds upon hundreds of fathoms of water going down to the unknown places of the earth, and on its surface, moving his little arms and legs valiantly, swam James Cotton, no larger than a fly's egg on a tank of water.

He swam on and on. As yet, because the water was buoyant, and because he made no attempt to hurry, he was untired. No ache had entered his arms, and no cramp inconvenienced his neck as he held his face clear of the water. He thought that he could go on swimming like this for a very long time. And in the warm water it was not unpleasant.

But there would be an end. He knew that. He would come to a moment, sooner or later, when he could swim no more. And then it would come—the beginning of his last battle against his own inability to stay alive any longer. He would feel, then, death enfolding him as a person enfolds a struggling animal in a great, smothering blanket, and, after a while, there would be no more struggling inside the blanket. He would be lying still in the dark folds of death.

As panic stirred in his stomach he began to pray. He said, "Please, God, let something happen. Please, God, in Thy great strength do something to help Thy servant."

He raised his head as high as he could and looked along the shining surface of the sea, but the sky was black, giving no silhouette of any object upon the empty water.

Not that he had expected to see anything: he knew very well that he was alone. He had seen the boats far away soon after he had begun to swim. They were already a great distance off and moving rapidly towards the horizon.

He had lifted himself in the water and shouted, but, because he was dazed and winded, his voice had been only a little gasp, a querulous complaint that would not have been heard, even close at hand, above the splashing of the oars.

And so he had rested in the water, swallowing and getting his breath, and waiting for the boats to come back for him. But they had not come. No doubt each thought that he was in another boat, or

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that he had been killed in the explosion. At any rate, when he had lifted himself in the water again, they were still further away and pulling strongly into the distance. And then the clouds had covered the sinking moon and it had become dark, and he was alone, swimming slowly in the water. And after that, as time passed, he grew to realize that no one was going to help him, and that sooner or later he must die by drowning.

But that was a very long while ago. Now he thought, "Shall I go on swimming? If it is going to happen in the end, why not do it now? Shall I stop swimming and let it happen and get it done with?"

But, even as he thought it, he knew that he could not do it. It would not be easy for him to force himself to sink, and he knew that at the moment when he felt the water pressing against his mouth, and bursting in against his ears and his closed eyes, at that moment —against his own will and because he could not help it—he would begin to kick again with his legs and struggle back to the surface and to the air that his lungs wanted, and he would have failed to let himself be swallowed alive in the clutch of the deep sea.

He turned his mind in the opposite direction and began to plan how best he could swim for a great time. He said to himself, "Now. First get out of your clothes. Your clothes will make you tired. Stop and get out of them."

But immediately he also thought that his clothes were a comfort to him and made him less lonely, and that naked he would be very afraid. Nevertheless he knew that what he had said was wise, and so he stopped obediently, moving his legs only gently enough to keep himself afloat, and began to undress in the water.

He began with his shirt, taking hold of it at the neck and tearing it down to the waist, and then pulling the rest of it out from inside his trousers and tearing that also right down to the hem. The torn cloth he pulled off his arms and let fall upon the water where it floated beside him for a long while.

Then, paddling with one arm, he undid the buckle of his belt and let it fall away and sink down into the depths beneath him. His trousers clung to him. He began to peel them down from his waist with his free hand, and soon they were a soggy mass sagging about his legs. He bent his knees and brought up his feet until he could reach the heavy bundle of water-logged cloth and began to force it down over his feet.

It was difficult to keep afloat while he did this, and once his mouth went under. He paddled faster with his right hand and kicked with his legs, and soon he had his left leg out of the trousers. He raised his right knee and wrenched the trousers down over his

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foot and let them go.

He was free now and began to swim on with his slow, methodical breast stroke. The water flowed about his stomach and on the insides of his thighs with a refreshing, tender softness.

He raised his head and looked up at the sky. Over to his right he could see a few stars. The solid bank of clouds was breaking. He could see the further edge of it, a faint dark line across the dark sky, and beyond it were the stars.

He thought, " I want light. I want some light to see by."

He began to be frightened. For the first time he felt a slight ache, a faint tiredness spreading over his arms. He knew that that space of time, that barrier of minutes like a fenced-in field, no longer lay between him and death. He was suddenly on the other side of the marked line and was slipping slowly down towards the moment of dying.

He began to swim harder. Now that he was naked he moved quickly through the water and for a little while he was reassured by the feeling of his own power.

Then he said to himself, " No ! No, you fool ! You're tiring yourself. Lie still and rest. Don't let it catch you like that. Just lie still and rest."

He turned over on to his back and spread out his arms, lying motionless upon the water.

Like that he knew that he was saving up the time that was left to him, but the feeling of doing nothing increased his fear. He felt that he was letting death come up close behind him without fighting against it, but forced himself to remain still, trusting to his wisdom and mistrusting his instinct, but all the time the fear fluttered like a live thing inside the cage of his heart.

Lying on his back, he could see the whole sky above him. The clouds were trailing away towards the Eastern horizon, and already a few stars shone above his upturned face. He was glad of them. He did not want to come to his last moments of life in darkness. Even a star to see, a silver lantern of light burning above him, would make death less hideous and less lonely as he fought with his last few, failing strokes to keep himself afloat.

He thought, " If I lie like this I can keep alive much longer. Perhaps until daylight. Perhaps for hours."

And then he thought, " If I could float for a whole day . . ."

He began to think that a ship might pass by. But, as he pictured the ship, a great, towering liner forging its way swiftly over the sea, he also pictured himself, a tiny head and a white, waving hand on the miles and miles of water. How far was it from one horizon to the other ? And how far could one see a head and a waving hand ?

He turned over on to his face and began to swim again. By

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swimming he filled some of his mind with the need to move his arms and legs, and so left less space for the fears which rushed in a choking flood into his mind whenever he rested.

He began to realize that the moment when he would be unable to keep afloat any longer was now not far distant. He realized that his thoughts of floating for a day, for hours even, were foolish. He felt, not only in his arms, but also in the muscles of his back, a growing pain and weariness that not even lying still on the surface of the water could lessen. He knew, too, that the pain was growing and spreading. He knew, suddenly, that now he had no hopes of anything.

All that was left to him was the futile, hopeless struggle against an exhaustion which already had fingers touching him, and which, even at that moment, was strengthening its grip ready to clutch him and drag him under.

He thought, "No! No . . ." and felt in his body already, as though he had jumped ahead in time, the agony of bursting lungs, and the water swelling in his throat, with his body twisting and clawing at darkness as life was choked out of it. And then nothing—dark, utter nothingness as his corpse floated in its ugliness in the dreary emptiness of the sea—floating, trailing dead arms and dead hair through the grey waters until in the end—

"No!" he screamed. "No! Oh God, no . . . no . . . don't let it."

He began to whimper and struggle in the darkness, closing his eyes and straining his head back to lift his mouth from the water. He felt the ache in his arms, and in his back, and in his legs, grow into a grim hold that pulled him downwards. He felt his brain begin to darken and become lost in the black swamps of incoherence. "No," he screamed. "God, please God, no!"

And then, as his hands threshed at the unresisting sea, he felt his fingers touch something solid. For a moment he was unaware of it. And then, as reason returned swiftly to his brain, the message of his fingers was recorded on his senses: he had touched something that did not give beneath his hand—something that was hard—something that was not water.

His eyes jerked open. In a moment, as his pupils dilated and adjusted themselves, he saw it. Something before him rose solidly out of the water—something that had square lines, horizontal and vertical, lines cutting sharply across the formless emptiness of the water and the sky.

His fingers clutched, and grasped wooden hardness. He pulled himself upwards out of the water. The wood floated, dipping a little beneath his weight but resisting strongly and buoyantly. He shifted his grip and pulled himself upwards again, heaving and gasping,

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until he felt the harshness of wood against the bare flesh of his stomach. He heaved again, with violence, desperately, and fell face downwards on to the bare planks of the raft. He lay, his legs still dragging in the sea, and let his heart thud away like an engine labouring for a moment under a load more heavy than it was meant to bear.

After a long while he rolled over and pulled his legs up on to the raft. His head had cleared now, and his breathing had slowed to a strong, deep rhythm. He lay relaxed upon the boards of the raft, his arms outstretched, thinking, " I am safe, I am safe . . ."

For a time, that was enough. Then he sat up. He knew that the raft gave him one thing only, and that was time. It gave him time, more time to live, more time to hope, but beyond that was still death. He could not live long on the raft, alone on the open sea, and naked.

He looked round him. It was lighter now. The sky had cleared and the stars burned over him like a diamond studded web, a rich pavilion spread above the vastness of the sea. And on the horizon there was a greyness in the darkness, a pale water-colour grey brushed in across the dark velvet distance. He sat up and looked, first out over the ocean, and then, close at hand, about him on the raft.

He saw that the raft was one which had lain upon the deck of the ship. It must have floated near him all through the night. Perhaps he had come closer to it by swimming. Or perhaps he had been swimming away from it and it had only drifted down upon him as he rested.

He examined it. It was a square of bare wood, resting on steel drums. It was a naked thing, as he was naked, floating on the empty water—empty, rigid, and bare, except in the corner behind his left shoulder where there was a slight bulge, an upward curving of its bleak and barren flatness.

He reached across and touched the roughness of canvas. He felt rope beneath his hand. He rose to his knees and bent over it, struggling with the rope until he was able to pull the canvas to one side. Below it was a tin, which, when he shook it, gave out the rattle of biscuits.

He looked round again. That was all there was. There was no water. A frayed rope's end showed where the keg had once been, and whence it had been torn away. He thought that perhaps a boatful of men had come upon it, and torn it free to take away from the empty raft where no one wanted it.

The fact that there was now nothing for him to drink on the raft was not in any way a shock to him. He merely noted it and accepted it as part of his new situation. He thought to himself, " It will cut

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down the time that I can live," but afterwards he settled himself to work out the chances of his survival. He had an orderly and patient mind.

He knew that he was still on his way to meet death, but it had moved further off again, and there was once more the fenced off area of time between him and it, and so he had leisure to turn his thoughts, for the present, to other things.

He looked again towards the horizon and saw that the rim of the world was now a clear, straight line, and that above it there was light, a pale grey-blue light the colour of a pigeon's wing and, as he watched, this became tinged with a fine, transparent green, as fragile as a green eggshell, and, before long, as though a lamp had been lit behind the green shell, a golden haze spread through the grey-blue and glowed through the green, until the sky was alive with the golden glitter of the rising sun.

As he watched he felt a gladness surge up into his heart. He felt that even colour was alive, and that brightness lived, so that he was no longer the only breathing thing hiding in the dead solitude of sea and night. As the sun rose he moved his own arms and legs and filled his lungs, arching his chest and contracting his stomach for the pleasure of moving his muscles to and fro in his living body.

He took the biscuit tin upon his lap and tore away the sealing tape that made it watertight, and pulled off the lid with his fingers. He placed the lid safely beside him and parted the folds of stiff paper in which the biscuits were wrapped.

The biscuits were as thick as his finger and about four and a half inches square. He put one to his mouth and bit at it with his teeth until he had bitten off a corner. He chewed it and the taste of it was sharp and good after the flavour of salt water in his mouth. He ate half the biscuit before the desire to drink made him put the remainder of it carefully back in the tin, and place the lid safely over it. He sat, holding the tin, and swallowed the portion of biscuit in his mouth. He wished that he had a cigarette, or something with a sweet flavour, such as a peppermint. He pulled the piece of canvas towards him and threw it over his shoulders to save him from sunburn.

All that morning he sat, his elbows resting upon his knees, and looked about the horizon for a sign of smoke, but the horizon remained a straight, sharp edge, unbroken by anything at all. It stretched round him in a great circle, as though drawn with a sharp and steady pencil, and was austere in its undefiled perfection. He sat, exactly at the centre of it, watching it all round him, moving his head to keep it all in view, patiently and hopefully, but nothing moved in all its many empty miles of flatness.

Towards noon, when the sun was blazing down from vertically above his head, he ate the rest of the biscuit, and found that he had

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less saliva in his mouth than he had had that morning. His tongue, as he passed it over his lips, left less coolness, and his lips remained sore and rough in texture. He lay down on the bare boards of the raft and covered himself with the canvas and went to sleep.

He was awakened by a new, sharp motion in the movements of the raft. He looked about him and saw that the sea was no longer oily smooth, but was whipped up into little dancing waves by a breeze from the west. The raft bobbed and slipped as the waves passed under it.

He looked upwards for the sun and saw that it was dropping towards the surface of the sea. He knew that he had slept for a long while. He stood up, balancing himself with the muscles of his legs to the lift and dip of the raft, and looked carefully all round, focusing his eyes against the glare from the bright sea.

He wondered where he was, and in which direction he was drifting, but had no way of telling. He wondered how far he had drifted from the spot where the ship had sunk. He stood gazing at the sea which surrounded him, but to him it was a lost, nameless space of water which had nothing to do with anything else in the world.

As the sun touched the sea's edge he put his hands over his face and gave himself up to grief, not because of his nearness to death, but because of his imprisonment in this lonely wilderness where no voice answered him.

Through most of that night he lay awake beneath his piece of canvas, looking up at the stars which seemed to swing above his head like a glittering chandelier as the raft dipped this way and that. His mouth was dry and he could not moisten it. He was prevented from sleeping by the involuntary swallowing motions of his throat. He lay awake, tired but sleepless, and waited for the night to pass and for daylight to come back again.

He thought about Jeannie. As the night's darkness blotted out the great distances of heaving water he no longer felt so removed from the rest of the world of living people. He remembered how beautiful Jeannie was, so tall and strong and beautiful.

When he first went to her mother's house to lodge, from the first moment that he saw her he had thought only that—how beautiful she was, beautiful in her proud tallness and magnificent strength. He saw her walk, on that first evening at her mother's house, down the narrow hall like a long-limbed animal of great power and beauty.

He felt his heart jump as he watched her strong, graceful hips lifting beneath her cotton dress as she walked away from him

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down the dim, dingy hallway. And he had felt the love for her burst like a sudden flame from the embers of his heart.

He saw, too, the room in Jeannie's home where he slept, and he saw himself in the iron bed with Jeannie standing by him with a tea cup from which the steam rose slowly. She had on a nightdress and a faded wrap on which smudged flowers were printed in many washed-out colours. Only her painted lips were bright and new. A freshly-lighted cigarette hung from her mouth, its smoke making her close her eyes against it. He could hear Jeannie's mother singing in the kitchen below.

He saw himself sit up in the bed and take the cup from Jeannie's hand and set it on the floor. He saw himself put out his hand and take hold of Jeannie round the waist and draw her down on to the bed beside him.

She said, " No. Mother will wonder where I am."

He took the cigarette from her mouth and she leaned down and kissed him, and he could feel the warm strength of her body that moved like a naked animal inside the covering of the faded wrap and thin nightdress. She was so strong, so strong and splendid. A woman and magnificent. The veins in his forehead pounded with the pressure of blood inside them. The muscles of her woman's body rippled beneath his arm about her waist.

She said, " Let me go. Please."

But he could not let her go. He pulled her lower and felt the soft roundness of her breasts yield against his cheek. He said, " Jeannie . . . Jeannie . . ."

She pulled herself away from him and took the cigarette from his hand and put it back between her painted lips. " Let me," he said, and she gave him the cigarette and he lay smoking it, tasting the sticky sweetness of her lipstick as well as the bitterness of the smoke in his mouth.

He began to weep as he remembered Jeannie, and soon he was asleep. He dreamed that he was walking on the side of a mountain, looking amongst the trees of a dense pine forest for a pool where women were bathing.

He awoke to find the sun already risen. He sat up, sweeping his eyes round the horizon, and then reached for the biscuit tin. He put a biscuit to his mouth and bit it, and chewed the broken piece. His teeth ground the piece of biscuit into a fine dust. But the dust lay in his mouth and he could not swallow it. He gulped forcibly but the biscuit dust lay stuck in his mouth and would not go down. His jaw began to ache with the strain of chewing and holding the biscuit dust in his mouth.

After a while he opened his lips and blew out the chewed

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biscuit like dry sand which fell upon his lap and lay there, hard and brittle. He brushed it away with his hand and stared out towards the horizon.

As the sun mounted he felt his skin shrink and crack over his bones. He crawled on hands and knees to the edge of the raft and lay on his chest and dabbled his legs in the sea, splashing water over his body. The water ran over his flesh, sweet, sharp, and refreshing. He lay there for a long while. Then he began to draw himself back on to the raft.

At once panic swept back in a cold wave over his heart. He found that the strength had gone out of his arms. He could not pull himself back on to the raft.

He lay still for a minute and then tensed his arms and pulled with all his might. Inch by inch he felt himself move forward. In a moment he found himself lying once more on the hard planks of the raft: He lay there sprawling, racking his lungs for breath, his heart jerking with a hammering, frightening unevenness. He lay and sweated, feeling his heart falter, go on, falter, and go on again.

After a while he crawled slowly back to the centre of the raft and lay there, covering himself with the canvas. His mind jumped back to when, as a boy with a fever, he had gone painfully up the stairs with tired legs, and undressed, and climbed laboriously into the comfort of his cool bed in his lamp-lit room, the pillow gentle to his cheek, and lain there, letting the peace and rest flood over him, waiting for his mother to come up to him with sweet tea and bread with golden butter.

He lay upon the raft beneath the canvas. Weakness bemused his mind. His thoughts came turbulently, swirling out of the darkness and deep mists, and slipping away again, too tenuous to hold.

He thought, " This is dying. This is death spreading over me. I can't think. My heart—my heart's growing weak. How long now ? How long ? What time is it ? "

He began to think of the names of people he had known, and to call them out in his mind. " John, Ronnie, Uncle Thomas, Jeannie, Jeannie, Mr. Robertson, Jeannie . . ." But he was still alone. He called out, " Oh God, please help me. Oh God, dear God, please God . . ."

He huddled himself together beneath the rough canvas, pulling his naked legs up to his naked stomach. His tongue was stiff and swollen in his mouth, a thick, bulky, painful thing which bulged against his teeth and scraped against the dry roof of his mouth like a gag.

He kept swallowing, hurting his throat at each convulsion. He felt sick. His stomach heaved, and the sweat streamed down his chest on to his huddled knees.

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In the afternoon, as the sun sank a little and lost its fierceness, he pushed the canvas away from him and lay stretched on the hot planks, letting the breeze cool his bare flesh. He lay with closed eyes for most of the time, only raising his head now and again to scan the empty horizon.

After each look he lay back and let the thoughts flow through his mind like pictures in an unending, disjointed film. He no longer tussled with the problem of being saved. He kept putting off the labour of working out his chances of being picked up. He kept telling himself that soon he would go back to it, but instead he let the old pictures and old memories unreel through his brain because that was the more simple.

He thought back to his boyhood and remembered the house where he had lived, with its rustic arbour in a corner of the dingy, soot-darkened back garden, and he remembered a fairy story book that he had had in which was a picture of a youth, wearing only a leopard skin about his loins, lying bound to the back of a white steed. The picture had stirred him and filled him with a feeling of guilt. He felt that he should not look at the picture of the beautiful youth lying bound across the crupper of the white horse, but had never known why that should be. Even now he felt the feeling of shame in his mind as he remembered the picture in the forgotten book.

He lay on the raft and felt the weakness spreading through his limbs. He shifted the great, woolly stick of his tongue from side to side in his mouth and told himself, " I'm dying. What is happening to me is death coming. And no one, not even Jeannie, knows that I am here on this raft."

He pulled himself slowly to a sitting position and looked round him, but everywhere was the same emptiness of grey sea, and round everything was that unending, straight line of unbroken horizon which met, mysteriously, behind his back. He let his head fall forwards on to his knees, his arms dangling on either side of his legs. He felt that this weakness, this first touch of death's fingers, was spreading slowly through him, and one by one his limbs would die and go limp, and in the end the weakness would crawl towards his thudding heart, and, when it touched his heart, his heart would stop, and in that moment he would be dead.

He sat, his unshaven cheek grating on his knee, and tried to fight away the swelling cancer of death inside him, trying to stave it off so that he should not die here alone, utterly alone, with no hand to touch him.

" Oh, God," he said, " dear God. Jeannie. Lord help me . . ."

He fainted and fell forwards, and when he opened his eyes again it was dark and his limbs were stiff and aching from his cramped position.

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He took a biscuit from the tin but could not even chew it. His tongue kept him from putting the biscuit into his mouth, and his gums bled as he tried to bite it. He rubbed his hands over his body and tried to moisten his lips with sweat, but although he could feel its dampness it was not enough to soothe his cracked lips.

He lay down again and pulled the canvas over him. He thought, " I fainted. I've been unconscious. Soon I shall be like that all the time, not knowing what is happening. And while I am like that I shall die."

He was afraid to die now. Before it had been only the act of dying that he had been afraid of. But now he knew that death might come to him without even his being aware of it, easily and without pain, and the new terror filled his mind of having to go alone into an unknown place.

He was afraid, with a child's unreasoning, blind fear, of going into a place where he would be lost and not know what to expect. He was afraid to find himself in a place where there was no ground beneath his feet, nothing to rest his hand upon, no voices—only space and darkness like a cave with no solid walls to guide one back to the light outside.

He lay trying to prevent himself from sleeping, for fear that he might be unable to wake again. He listened to the lap of the water on the raft. He tried to imagine where he might be on the face of the thousands of miles of sea, and wondered where the nearest place was where there was a man—a man sitting reading a book, or walking along a road with a pipe in his mouth—a man who, even if he did not understand his language, would listen while he spoke, and perhaps point with his finger, helpfully or questioningly, nodding his head in thought.

But he had no idea where he was, and all round him there was only water on which there was no sign or path to lead him anywhere. He lay huddled beneath his canvas and was aware only of his body, aching and painful, the whole of his mouth like a raw wound, and waited for death to come.

He thought of Jeannie again, and remembered another day on which they were picking apples in an orchard, and Jeannie was on the branch of a tree above him, throwing down the apples for him to put in the basket which she had given him. Each time that she threw an apple she laughed and called, " Hup," and he caught the apple and laid it amongst the others in the basket.

He stood bare footed in the cool grass and watched her as she climbed from branch to branch. She was wearing blue linen trousers and the yellow top part of a sun-suit, and between the blue cloth and the yellow her skin was the shining blue-whiteness

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of watered milk. As she reached out to pick the fruit he saw the muscles move like rippled water over the smoothness of her gleaming flesh. Her yellow hair shone like polished metal against the flat greenness of the leaves. The blue trousers were tight about the fullness of her rounded flanks, and when she leaned backwards to reach high above her head her whole body was as taut and vibrant as a slim, strong bow.

And when the basket was full she called down to him, " Help me down," and stood waiting on the lowest bough for him to catch her, but as he stood waiting for her to jump he was unable to speak for the trembling of his own body.

He stood looking up at her and thought, " There is nothing so beautiful in the world as a woman," and when she jumped he held her in his arms and looked down at her. She lay, resting against him, and looked up, laughing, and his whole body trembled with the blaze of longing in his mind.

He stroked her smooth bare arms with the palm of his hand and looked down at her with his lips trembling. She said, " What is it ? What is the matter with you ? " But he could not answer. He laid his hand on the soft skin below her ribs and then lowered her quickly to the grass and walked away swiftly so that she might not see the tears standing in his eyes. She called after him, " What's the matter ? Come back," but he walked on, swearing and calling himself a fool.

He shivered and opened his eyes and he was lying on the raft again, his limbs shaking with fever. His head ached and he called out in fear of dying. His tongue filled his mouth, choking him, so that he took hold of it with his fingers and tried to pull it out.

The pain in his head became an immense, roaring sheet of flame which burned his eyes as he lay fighting to draw air down into his lungs through his swollen throat. He pushed away the canvas and got to his knees.

He felt the raft rocking but was unable to see what he was doing. He crawled slowly over the planks towards its edge. As he reached it he fell and lay huddled at the side of the raft.

He thought, " Now I'll end it. I can't stand it. I won't stand it." He screamed and the force of it tore his throat like a knife.

He moved slowly towards the edge of the raft, feeling his way with his hands, trying to pull himself down into the cool water where there was rest and no suffering. He fell again and buried his face in his hands.

He saw Jeannie again, but now there was only her face in a grey mist. He pulled at the mist with his hands and saw her shoulders, white and strong and polished, and clawed his way towards them so that he might take hold of them and save himself. He tore at the grey

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mist, pulling it away from in front of him and throwing it behind him, and in a little while he could see her body, white as marble amongst the swirling clouds, and fought viciously to take hold of her shoulders and draw himself to safety. But his fingers touched only the coldness of the mist and could not feel the warmth of her flesh, and then he had fallen into the mist and was falling downwards for a long while, shrieking and sobbing.

He had drawn himself up onto a ledge of rock and stood erect, but down the steep slope of the hill rushed a herd of white, wild horses, their nostrils wide and their eyes burning like blue stones. He cried out to them to stop but they stared at him with their furious eyes and thundered down upon him, striking him down with their hooves upon his forehead, and he was hurled from the ledge and was falling again, falling amongst the mist and black shapes of terror which swirled like headless vultures.

When he opened his eyes again he knew that a long while had passed. He was lying on his face and the hard planks had bruised his cheeks, but even without that he would have known it.

He rolled over on to his back and saw blue sky above him, but the dazzle struck into his brain and he closed his eyes and lay still, thinking.

For a second he thought, "The raft has stopped tilting," but even as he thought about it he felt it rocking again beneath him with the slow, never ending rhythm of the sea's swaying. He thought, "Last night I was mad. I was insane. Soon I shall be mad again, mad and screaming. That is how people die from thirst. They go mad and die insane. Or they kill themselves."

He thought about that and then, suddenly, found himself standing alone in the middle of the floor in a large room like a bar. All round him were small tables at which sat men and women, and all of them were silent and staring at him. Wherever he looked were the silent faces staring at him.

He knew that it was not true, and with an effort of will brought himself back again to the raft. He said, "I am mad. I am going mad."

He lay with his eyes closed, crying weakly. Misery was like an ague chilling his whole body. He said, "No! No, I won't let it!" and began to concentrate his whole mind on the task of escape. The water was close to him and would take him in. In the water he would escape from suffering that had become a whole world in which there was nothing else but pain and agony and the horror of mad shapes in the darkness.

He called out, "I must, I must! Please, God, help me!" He began to struggle towards the edge of the raft, groping with

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his hands, grasping and moaning. He felt the edge of the planks and pushed himself forwards with his legs until he was balanced on the edge. And then he threw his weight forwards and fell.

But no water cooled him. There was no refreshing ease to take him softly into sleep. He felt himself falling and let his muscles slip into looseness as he gave himself up to the end of everything, but no pause came in his pain and weariness. Instead he was struck by a blow which crushed the breath from his lungs and made his stomach heave and retch.

He knew that he was no longer falling. He lay, defeated, and whimpered like a sick dog. He could not make another effort. He put out his hand to feel the edge of the raft to know how far there was still for him to move. He moved his hand this way and that but could not find it.

He lay still, trembling, his heart thumping, and tried to think what had happened, but his mind was smothered in a dark emptiness in which he could not use his thoughts.

He lay waiting for the end.

He did not know what happened next but there came into his brain slowly a whisper, "What is this that I am touching?" He moved his fingers again, feeling about him for the edge of the raft again, and slowly he began to know that it was not wood beneath his hand.

He pressed his fingers down and felt the gritty softness of something that yielded beneath them. For a long while he lay still, feeling with his finger tips and wondering. And then, cautiously, he opened his eyes a little, shielding them against the pain of the sun. At first he could see nothing. And then, turning his head a little, he saw a sheet of yellow. He thought that it looked like sand and lifted his head and saw the raft lying beside him.

He closed his eyes and thought, "I have fallen from the raft and am lying on sand."

He opened his eyes slowly and looked again. The sand stretched into the distance and beside him lay the raft. He lifted his head and looked about him. He was lying beside the raft on a long stretch of sandy beach. Close beside him was the litter of dead seaweed that marked high-water line.

He pressed his hands down into the sand and raised his body. Beyond the sand was a line of yellow dunes above which grew a line of palm trees.

He moved the swollen stick of his tongue in his mouth and then began to crawl, dragging his legs slowly behind him, across the beach towards the line of trees. He no longer felt the pain of his body.

His mind was filled only with the task of reaching the greenness

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of the trees. He moved, foot by foot, across the beach, away from the white scum of the water's edge, a small, naked figure travelling slowly over the ground towards the trees. He said to himself, "I'll get there. I'll get there soon."

* * *

SONGS OF INNOCENCE!

Raised by the book—at least that's where you'll find them. How many can you recognize of these children of fiction? Allow one point for the child, one for the source and one for the author, twenty-seven in all. Twenty-one is excellent, fifteen good, and twelve a pass. The answers are on page 82.

1. *He stretched out his arms to ravish a kiss, but his fair enslaver vanished; upon which the elephantine youth ate a pound or so of steak and fell fast asleep.*

2. *He really must have been quite a shocking child for his age, with his revel in "ungodly glee, concubines, and carnal companie!"*

3. *He wasn't giving up his Derby ticket for anyone, not even for ten shillings, but he paid for it, more in heat than anything else.*

4. *He was not a Jacobite—he was a loyal subject of King George, but he stood by the Stuart against a gold-thirsty crew, and followed him through many adventures.*

5. *He wasn't going to keep any more secrets. He was tired of being mixed up in the emotions and confidences of the grown-up world. After all he was only a child.*

6. *"My stockings there I often knit, my kerchief there I hem; and there upon the ground I sit—I sit and sing to them." But I don't seem to be able to count straight!*

7. *He was evidently unpopular with his aunt, who confided to her husband, "The Miserable, Peevish Brat! Why don't they drown the Little Beast?"*

8. *His boyhood, packed with excitement, reached a climax when he and Becky were lost in the cave, and the village mourned them. Then the children's hopes were raised. "It's them," he said, "they're coming!—we're all right now."*

9. *She met the queerest knight in the forest, equipped with a beehive, a sandwich box, a mousetrap and anklets for his horse "to guard against the bites of sharks!"*

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KING OD

"That is my secret," he said, "something that you will never understand"

by HOWARD JONES

I PICKED this fellow up on that desolate stretch of road across Dannington Down. It was an evening of early autumn, and mists were rising above fields already darkened with the dusk. The fellow seemed to conjure himself from this surrounding gloom: a short, dark-suited figure with hands aloft, sudden and stark against the yellow roadway.

I stopped the car. He thrust a pale, bearded face against the window.

"Do you want a lift?" I asked.

His head jerked.

"If you please. Into the next town."

He scrambled in beside me, and I started up. For a while he sat in silence, craning his head away from me and rubbing his hands together a little nervously. Then his eyes dropped on the evening paper folded in the cubby.

"Have you seen that?" he asked.

"Glanced at it," I said.

"Did you see that the little Professor has escaped from the asylum?"

"Professor Preece?" I said. "Yes, I saw that. He's liable to be dangerous when he's loose, isn't he?"

The fellow prodded my knee with a yellow finger.

"He's clever, I tell you—clever! Look at that business of King Od . . . Remember?"

I considered, then answered slowly: "I seem to remember something . . . Yes, I *do* remember. An ancient British king, wasn't he?"

"King Od," said the fellow. "Tucked away snugly in the earth these twenty-five centuries. Nothing to show where he was buried, mind you—no burial mound or any such thing. But the little professor knew—he knew! Oh, he's clever! He worked out this and worked out that, and he dug down in the right place, and found King Od. Not a heap of bones and dust and urns, I tell you, but a man asleep in the full regalia of a mighty king."

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"H'm, yes," I said. "But nobody believed it. They said it was a fake, a clumsy attempt to hoodwink the press and public . . . And if memory serves me, the body of King Od wasn't to be found when the experts arrived to examine it. That's what made them first suspect Professor Preece was a lunatic. And didn't—didn't he swear to produce King Od at a later date?"

"That's so," said the fellow, with a twitch of his shoulders. "He was too clever for them. They didn't believe him, and their disbelief provoked him beyond endurance."

"He become violent. Isn't that so?"

'Naturally. Would *you* care to be called a liar to your face?"

"No," I answered slowly. "No. I shouldn't care for that."

"Nor me! Nothing angers me more than to be called a liar. And I tell you again the little Professor was not a fraud. He really *did* discover King Od."

I remarked: "You seem to speak with great authority, if I may say so."

"Yes," said the fellow. "Yes, I speak with great authority. I am King Od."

Darkness now had deepened all around us. I flicked on the headlights, and the beams lay thick and solid on the empty road like the shimmering blade of some great sword. The reflected light touched the long thin nose and high cheekbones of my companion. He turned his head quickly.

"Why do you drive so slowly? Please drive faster. I am in a hurry."

I drove faster. And after a mile or so, I said: "I am sorry, would you explain further? You say you are King Od. If that is so, you are exceptionally old. If that is so, surely you are not living flesh and blood? You are really dead?"

"For me," he answered softly—"for me there is no death. I am Od, the Belgic king, and for years beyond number I lay beneath this downland soil—not dead, but dreaming. For me there is no death, there never will be death. I have the means of defying all decay and corruption. That is my secret, my very own, something you will never understand. But the little Professor, *he* understood. He found me where I lay sleeping, and at once he understood the nature of my secret."

I thought this over. "You have our modern speech, our modern clothes," I pointed out.

"Faster," said the fellow. "Faster still . . . Now listen . . . The little Professor, I say, understood as soon as he found me. He carried me away to a secret place, and there soon I stirred in my great slumber. He is a man of infinite goodness, of infinite

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kindness, the little Professor. He taught me many things, the ways of this strange new world, the customs, the manner of speech. He was my good friend, the little Professor, and in the fulness of time he would have produced me before those ignorant fools who shrieked their disbelief at him. Do you follow?"

"Every word," I said.

"Good, good! If they had curbed their derision and disbelief, those fools, all would have been well. But no! They must jibe and insult, they must call my little Professor a cheat and a liar. Everyone called him that, a cheat and a liar. He is a sensitive man, and they provoked him beyond endurance. So then they took him away, and I was left alone. Can you imagine that? Friendless and alone in a world of enemies! Once I was a king over my people, a great warrior, a bold man, and wise. Do I deserve such a fate?"

I shook my head.

"Well, no matter," said the fellow. "I have a plan."

Ahead, the lights of the town gleamed through the darkness like a heap of roseate pearls. The fellow craned forward until his nose was touching the windscreen. "I have a plan, a very good plan," he repeated. "Slower, now—slower!" And when, at length, I swung around that awkward corner of the main street, he lifted a skinny hand, and shouted: "Stop!"

I stopped. He fumbled at the dashboard and alighted.

"You're a terrible liar!" I said.

"What!" he cried, turning.

"You're not King Od," I said.

For the first time he smiled.

"No, I'm not King Od . . . But it amused you, didn't it? It puzzled you, and kept you thinking, didn't it? Do you know who I am?"

"From the asylum, I imagine," I said.

"That's so," he agreed. "Not even my best friends know me with this beard."

"There's just one more thing," I told him. "You've taken the ignition key of the car. Why?"

"Part of my plan," he said. "You've stopped most conveniently outside the police station. Now, will you come in quietly, my little Professor Preece, or shall I call out the coppers?"

He called out the coppers. It took eight of them to get me in.

* * *

VISTA

Every man's memory is his private literature.

ALDOUS HUXLEY

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To Each His Own

Give a man a horse he can ride,
Give a man a boat he can sail ;
And his rank and wealth, his strength and health,
On sea nor shore shall fail.

Give a man a girl he can love,
As I, O my love, love thee ;
And his heart is great with the pulse of Fate,
At home, on land, on sea.

JAMES THOMSON, 1834-1882

Man of Parts

I am looking over the sea and endeavouring to reckon up the estate I have to offer you. As far as I can make out, my equipment consists of the following items.

1st. A Straw Hat. The oldest part of this admirable relic shows traces of pure Norman work.

2nd. A Walking Stick, very knobby and heavy: admirably fitted to break the head of any denizen of Suffolk who denies that you are the noblest of ladies, but of no other manifest use.

3rd. An unwieldy sort of pocket knife, the blades mostly having an edge of a more varied and picturesque outline than is provided by the prosaic cutler. The chief element however is a thing "to take stones out of a horse's hoof." What a beautiful sensation of security it gives one to reflect that if one should ever have money enough to buy a horse and should happen to buy one and the horse should happen to have a stone in his hoof—that one is ready; one stands prepared.

4th. Passing from the last miracle of practical foresight, we come to a box of matches. Every now and then I strike one of these, because fire is beautiful and burns your fingers.

5th. A body, equally idle and quite equally omnivorous, absorbing tea, coffee, claret, sea-water and oxygen to its own perfect satisfaction. It is happiest swimming, I think, the sea being about a convenient size.

6th. A Heart—mislaid somewhere. And that is about all of which an inventory can be made at present. After all, my tastes are stoically simple. A straw hat, a stick, a box of matches and some of his own poetry. What more does man require? . . .

G. K. CHESTERTON, 1874-1936, *in a Letter to a Fiancée*

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THE SHINING GOD

Was it something told to him long ago—or was it a dream?

by MICHAEL HASTINGS

WHEN he was old enough to clamber over the slippery ledges in search of his own food Loh made a discovery. The world was not black. He could see. He wasn't able to explain it that way, of course. All he knew was that there was an awareness which had nothing to do with smell or touch. Above, below, and all about him there was the blackness; but when he was able to come close to anything there was a difference. The rock wall between where his people lived and the great lake was still dark; but he could place his hand on the top of it without having to grope upwards with his fingers.

It wasn't an accident. He stood there and did it time after time, until he grew tired of staying upright. There was another thing that he found. His outstretched arm wasn't as black as the rock. And when his people came near him they became like his arm. He didn't need to finger at their bodies to know just where they were.

It was like, he thought, being asleep. When he curled up and pillowed his head on his arms there was a blankness in his mind. A blankness during which he was no longer there on the flat rock with his people. Then the blankness would change and he would be somewhere else, with his extra awareness. But it had always faded when he'd stirred in search of food, when his body had crawled away from the sleep.

His legs were tired. He turned from the rock wall and went over to his huddle of moss. As he lay down on it and curled himself up, he picked up some of the moss and held it near to his face. No, the moss hadn't the same blackness as the world, either. Neither was it the same as his hand. It was something between the two.

There was a scuffle near to him, a sound between a grunt and a sigh. That was his father. Loh wondered whether to creep over and try to tell him about the discovery. But he was afraid. He remembered that his mother had told him once of one of their people who had tried to say that the blackness wasn't the world, that if you climbed up through it you'd come to a different place. The other men had fallen on him, dragged him screaming to the lake and

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flung him into it. They'd stayed there to push at him when he struggled to climb out. After a time he hadn't been strong enough to try any more. He'd cried, as a child cries, and then there was a gulping, gasping sound. Nothing after that. Just silence and the blackness.

Loh thought of the lake, remembered the coldness of it as he'd lain upon his belly, one arm in the water groping for fish. He thought of being thrown into it, and shuddered. No! He mustn't tell his father. There was something wrong about doubting the blackness of the world. He trembled with guilt. He knew what had happened. He'd stolen something from the sleep. He must sleep again and take it back.

"The world is black," he whispered. "There is nothing beyond the blackness."

His mind, though, would not rest content. This different awareness had set it in motion. It was like fishing. One came near to your sensitive fingers, which could feel the water vibrations. Your snatch was a little too late. The startled fish darted away, and his movement upset his companions. You had to wait a long time if you made that sort of mistake; you grew hungry long before the fish were back.

Loh's mind was in a similar agitation. Once, the story of the man who'd said there was something above the world was no more than a fable holding a warning. Now, he felt akin to the man. He wanted to bring him back out of the water and talk to him. Only it had happened so long ago. He'd never find the body; and if he did it would be in the sleep that goes on. But he loved that man. He wanted to weep with pity.

Then he was miserable, more miserable than ever before because he knew that he was persisting in being wicked, that the evil in him was growing, growing much faster than the moss plants which lived for ever.

No, he must sleep, give his thoughts back to sleep, and give back the stolen awareness. Only he didn't want to give them back. He wanted to fight in order that he could hold on to all this. He would fight his own people, even fight Nua, whom he loved.

Dare he tell Nua?

He knew what would happen. Nua would cry. He'd be sorry if he made her cry. Maybe he wouldn't tell her, not yet. Perhaps it would all go, in the sleep, and there'd only be a vague memory left. In the blackness few things lasted for long—there was nothing to stimulate memory and unless a special effort was made such things evaporated.

Loh knew his mind to be a jumble; fragments of things which had happened to him, jostling against what he had been told; and

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a deeper, disturbing beyond-memory which he rarely understood. This awareness and the uneasiness which it caused might slide away like one of the small lizards. When he became hungry and went in search of fish-food he'd have to grope in the old way, using his fingers to explore the rock wall.

Something within him went sick at the thought. Down inside him there was a sob which wouldn't break. He lay there, sweating his agony.

Loh's leg hurt him. Still half-asleep, he stirred and began to rub the pain away. Then, awakening full upon him, he brought his hands up near to his face. For a moment his body was tense, then he leaned back with a long sigh. The awareness was still with him. He wanted to weep in sheer thankfulness. The sleep hadn't taken it from him. He was the same as he was before. He began to wonder if he hadn't always possessed this extra faculty. He tried to think back. He couldn't be sure.

His mind, though, was clearer than it had been. He knew now that this new gift came from his eyes. So eyes were meant for more than tears. That was a revelation. It brought back some of the old trembling.

He knew that, from this moment, he couldn't be the same as the rest of his people. Already he was outcast. To tell them of his new power would only make them fear him, because he was different. Fear, in turn, would make them want to destroy him. Fear was a madness.

Loh stood up. He began to move towards the rock wall. Then he remembered Nua, and stopped. He couldn't leave Nua. He must try to save her.

Quietly, he went back, moving among the sleepers until he found her. He took her arm and shook her gently. She whimpered a little, until he whispered : " Come with me."

Then she tried to follow.

He lost her so quickly, and had to go back ; blaming himself for not realizing that she had to grope her way, that she was not like himself. He came to her, and this time he kept hold of her arm. She went quietly, whispering once, " Slower, slower." It vexed him, for he was eager to be away as quickly as possible. He pulled her impatiently over the rock wall, so that she began to make fretful moans.

This scared him back to kindness. He murmured gently, and stroked her arm until he'd soothed her. Then he led her along the narrow shelf which ran beside the lake.

There were no alarming sounds behind them. Loh was satisfied that he had been released from the sleep earlier than the

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others. But he was anxious until the ledge narrowed. This, he knew, was the limit of the shelf used by his people. There were stories that men had gone beyond, long, long ago. He couldn't tell whether they were true, these stories.

Nua gripped him by the wrist. "Turn back," she said.

"Not yet," he said firmly.

At first he thought she would struggle; but after hesitating she became pliant to his will. He was very careful with her, guiding her and helping her over the difficult places.

For himself he cared little. It seemed to him that his new awareness was becoming more powerful. The blackness above was still mystery; but he could make out the fringe of the lake, and could tell each time where to put his foot.

But he was thankful when the ledge widened again, for Nua was dragging on him. Walking so far in an upright position was more of a strain for her than for him. Excitement was giving him strength, while poor Nua was frightened and didn't understand.

Now that he was less worried about pursuit and that there was so much dry flat rock about them, he permitted her to rest for a short time. He wanted to leave her so that he could explore; but each time he tried to move away she clung to him and began to make low, wailing noises.

"Just a little more," he encouraged. "Let's have water."

They drank, cupping the water in their hands. Loh caught a few fish. They were only small; but he was more excited than ever before because now his eyes were able to help him. The fish had a streak along their bodies which showed up in the darkness. He wanted to tell Nua, but he didn't dare for fear of making her even more scared.

While they rested, Loh tried to think. The man in his mother's story had insisted that it was possible to climb up through the blackness. It was a frightening idea, splitting open the beliefs of his people. The world was like the egg of a lizard, only much, much bigger. And everything that was, was inside the egg, and the blackness was a protection.

Nua's terror infected Loh; but it was worse for him than it was for her. She was merely lost in the blackness; she was not alone in it, and she could put her trust in Loh. For him there was no comfort. He was slave to an impulse; but not a blind slave. He knew that something within him was forcing him onwards, compelling him to make the attempt to climb through the world of his people. This gift of awareness was working in his mind, churning his thoughts into a turmoil.

Whatever happened, he knew that he could never turn back.

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He dragged Nua to her feet. The rock sloped up from the lake. They began to climb, leaving the water behind them. It seemed to him that now they were going a different way; but he had no real sense of direction. Only the knowledge—or instinct—that they must climb up into the blackness.

There was some hard climbing, with great pieces of rock over which they had to scramble. It was slow, too; so much slower than he wanted. He could go twice as fast as Nua; but although his impatience tempted him to abandon her, he was obstinately determined to take her with him. He wasn't sure why. There seemed some sort of command in his mind, although he had no knowledge of what had put it there.

The way ahead became steeper, and the great rocks were left behind. There was loose stuff under their feet, and some patches which were almost as soft as the moss bundles on which they slept. Loh liked the powdery feel of this, and Nua stooped down to scoop some of it in her fingers. She made soft gurgling sounds of pleasure.

But Loh was worried.

It seemed to him that they were penetrating the blackness. It was becoming so thick that his new awareness was of little help. Panic stabbed at him. Suppose he lost it now . . . would he be able to grope his way back to the lake? He had no idea of its position, except that it lay somewhere below them.

There was more of the softness underfoot, and it was here that he became truly lost because there was a ridge of it and three times he found himself back again on this ridge. He knew it was the same because of the hollows left by their feet. In the end, instead of trying to cross the ridge and press beyond it, he followed it until he came to a great sheet of rock up which it was impossible to climb. He slid his fingers up until his arms were stretched to the uttermost, and still there was the smooth rock and no top to it.

His mind didn't work quickly and it was some time before he stopped feeling the rock and began to move onwards keeping it at his side. The blackness increased and he had to put his hand so close to his eyes that he was touching his nose. But this reassured him. Some of the awareness remained.

Nua was very quiet. She'd sobbed a little and told him she was tired; but he'd spoken sharply. After that she said nothing. But her grip upon his arm tightened so that her fingers dug into his flesh.

He was too concerned with another discovery to heed the pain she was causing. His head knocked against something and he explored it with his free hand. It was like a great tooth, only of rock. Beyond it there were other, similar teeth. They came from up, not from below. He couldn't determine how far up they started. But on

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the floor, which had suddenly become hard, there were more teeth, smaller ones, striving to reach up to the big ones above. In a shallow depression there was water, very cold, even colder than the lake.

He was glad of this discovery, for he was thirsty. He persuaded Nua to drink, and she seemed to forget her fears in running her fingers over the rock teeth. He let her rest for a while, and found it a relief to stretch out his own legs. But there was no peace in his mind, which was busy grappling with problems. It was an effort to look ahead, for down in the blackness there was no conception of time. He was incapable of comprehending the future. Dimly, though, he realized that something happened to the present, that it went and another present took its place.

They couldn't stay where they were, that was certain. There were no fish in this tiny pool of water. There was not even the moss.

Loh had another thought; more disturbing. Never before had there been anything from above. Over his head there had always been the darkness which could not be touched. But now there were these rock teeth coming down. Surely, he must be near the roof of the world.

Was there a split or a gap through which he could crawl out and escape? Or was there no way? Was this thought of another world no more than a dream?

He stood up, and helped Nua. She was still tired and she dragged on him a little. But she couldn't stop him, nothing could stop him. He was going to find out. A trembling excitement seized him so that he came near to falling.

Soon there were no more rock teeth, and that sense which was an extension of feeling warned him that everywhere the rock was nearer. He raised an arm and felt it above him; he reached out sideways and the rock was there. Soon the way was so narrow that he could no longer move upright, and every time he swayed, there was the rock against his shoulders. It was like penetrating a secret place of the blackness. He talked, to encourage Nua, who had begun to cry again.

Then his head knocked into rock and he was near to crying himself. He pushed at the rock; but it was firm against him. So he began to turn . . . and then he stopped. Every part of him was quivering.

Far ahead, very small, there was a break in the blackness. It was his new sense of awareness which told him that, and at first he thought that it must be deceiving him. But there was confirmation in his nostrils. Breathing was different. More life seemed to enter into him.

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"Come, Nua!" he cried.

He could see, now, the sudden turn in the passage. He could see the darkness of the rock—and the bright patch beyond. Near this patch he could see the small pieces of rock and the softer stuff which was lighter than the blackness. He scrambled onwards, dragging Nua after him.

But when he came to the top, he forgot her in his eagerness. One moment he was in the narrow rock world, the next he was out in the other world. Out in the day!

The light was too much for him. His eyes hurt so that he had to clap his hands over them. There were stabbing pains in his head and he felt dizzy.

There was warmth in the air. He parted his fingers a little and peeped through them. Before him stretched the soft powder which was so pleasant to walk over. And growing out of it was the moss—only so much bigger than the moss, and all different shapes. Some of it grew on tall things which were like the rock teeth. And above it all was the dazzling brightness. Near him there was water, trickling down to a lake—only this lake threw up the light.

For a time he rested. Nua crept beside him, on her knees. She kept her head lowered. Her skin was like the brightness, only it was dead. And the moss which she wore was dead, not like the living moss which was all around.

"Stay here, Nua," he said.

She didn't answer. He saw that she was covering her face with her hands.

He stepped out, and then stopped. Afraid. For there in front of him was the shining god. He dropped down, flat on his face. He wanted to run back into the blackness; but his legs would no longer serve him.

Nothing happened. There was the chattering of the water, and a soft, brushing noise from the moss. At last he dared to look up. The shining god had not moved. On his belly, Loh crawled towards it, until he was below it. Then he stood up and his hands touched it. Smooth, smoother than rock. It was like a great fish, and on either side there were stiff fins spread out. One was broken and dropped into the ground.

Loh looked up and saw something small and dark moving through the space, from one patch of moss to the other. It never touched the ground in its passing.

Suddenly, he reeled backwards.

Was it race memory—something told to him long ago—or something from a dream? The great shining god screaming through space, the shattering explosion, the sudden bursting of brightness above the earth, then a great mushrooming cloud, and

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then the rain of death. This was the fallen god, the instrument of evil that had sent his people down into the blackness under the earth.

Now, the god was no more. And this world of brightness remained.

Loh turned to the rocks.

"Nua!" he called.

She came towards him slowly, her hands shielding her eyes. So the gift had reached Nua, too. She could know the brightness which had called him up from the world of blackness.

He went to meet her, holding out his arms to her. Then, taking her hand in his, he began to walk with her towards where the moss grew, so wonderfully large and thick.

Adam back on the new-found earth, leading his woman . . .

* * *

ANSWERS to SONGS OF INNOCENCE! on page 70

1. *The Fat Boy in "The Pickwick Papers," by Charles Dickens.*
2. *Harold in the narrative poem of "Childe Harold," by Lord Byron.*
3. *Tom in "Tom Brown's Schooldays," by Thomas Hughes.*
4. *David Balfour in "Kidnapped," by R. L. Stevenson.*
5. *Philip Lane, the little boy in Graham Green's story "The Basement Room."*
6. *The little girl in William Wordsworth's poem "We are Seven."*
7. *Lord Lundy in Hilaire Belloc's poem "Lord Lundy."*
8. *Tom Sawyer in Mark Twain's story "The Adventures of Tom Sawyer."*
9. *Alice meets the White Knight in "Through the Looking-Glass," by Lewis Carroll.*

* * *

SOLUTION to ARGOSY CROSSWORD on page 160

Across. 1, Housewarming. 8, Avarice. 9, Brusque. 12, Nuts. 13, Ditto. 14, Bach. 17, Bunting. 18, Satchel. 19, Recluse. 22, Diviner. 24, Utah. 25, Bravo. 26, Twit. 29, Harwich. 31, Cartoon. 32, Both ends meet.

Down. 1, Hearten. 2, Unit. 3, Evening. 4, Arbutus. 5, Maul. 6, Gnu. 7, Gainsborough. 10, Quash. 11, Exhilarating. 15, Pique. 16, Stave. 20, Chair. 21, Earthen. 22, Devices. 23, Newport. 27, Wish. 28, Tree. 30, Alb.

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★*Written more than five centuries ago by an unknown author, "The Story of Ming-Y" is one of the few examples of ancient Chinese fiction. On the whole the Chinese despised the art of storytelling for its own sake, and they rarely wrote fiction except as a means of moral instruction.*

But "The Story of Ming-Y," with its romantic element and delicate beauty, has an unusual charm for the modern reader—although even here we have a strong suspicion that the author drew a moral of his own!

THE STORY OF MING-Y

FIVE hundred years ago, in the reign of the Emperor Houng-Wou, whose dynasty was *Ming*, there lived in the city of Genii, the city of Kwang-tchau-fu, a man celebrated for his learning and for his piety, named Tien-Pelou. This Tien-Pelou had one son, a beautiful boy, who for scholarship and for bodily grace and for polite accomplishments had no superior among the youths of his age. And his name was Ming-Y.

Now when the lad was in his eighteenth summer, it came to pass that Pelou, his father, was appointed Inspector of Public Instruction at the city of Tching-tou; and Ming-Y accompanied his parents thither. Near the city of Tching-tou lived a rich man of rank, a high commissioner of the government, whose name was Tchang, and who wanted to find a worthy teacher for his children. On hearing of the arrival of the new Inspector of Public Instruction, the noble Tchang visited him to obtain advice in this matter; and happening to meet and converse with Pelou's accomplished son, immediately engaged Ming-Y as a private tutor for his family.

Now as the house of this Lord Tchang was situated several miles from town, it was deemed best that Ming-Y should abide in the house of his employer. Accordingly the youth made ready all things necessary for his new sojourn and his parents, bidding him farewell, counselled him wisely in the words of the ancient sages:

"By a beautiful face the world is filled with love; but Heaven may never be deceived thereby. Shouldst thou behold a woman coming from the East, look thou to the West; shouldst thou perceive a maiden approaching from the West, turn thy eyes to the East."

If Ming-Y did not heed this counsel in after days, it was only

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because of his youth and the thoughtlessness of a naturally joyous heart.

And he departed to abide in the house of Lord Tchang, while the autumn passed, and the winter also.

When the time of the second moon of spring was drawing near, and that happy day which the Chinese call *Hoa-tchao*, or, "The Birthday of a Hundred Flowers," a longing came upon Ming-Y to see his parents and he opened his heart to the good Tchang, who not only gave him the permission he desired, but also pressed into his hand a silver gift of two ounces, thinking that the lad might wish to bring some little memento to his father and mother.

That day all the air was drowsy with blossom perfume, and vibrant with the droning of bees. It seemed to Ming-Y that the path he followed had not been trodden by any other for many long years; the grass was tall upon it; vast trees on either side interlocked their mighty and mossgrown arms above him, beshadowing the way; but the leafy obscurities quivered with birdsong, and the deep vistas of the wood were glorified by vapours of gold, and odorous with flower-breathings as a temple with incense. The dreamy joy of the day entered into the heart of Ming-Y; and he sat him down among the young blossoms, under the branches swaying against the violet sky, to drink in the perfume and the light, and to enjoy the great sweet silence.

Even while thus reposing, a sound caused him to turn his eyes towards a shady place where wild peach trees were in bloom; and he beheld a young woman, beautiful as the blossoms themselves, trying to hide among them. Though he looked for a moment only, Ming-Y could not avoid discerning the loveliness of her face, the golden purity of her complexion, and the brightness of her long eyes that sparkled under a pair of brows as daintily curved as the wings of the silkworm butterfly outspread.

Ming-Y at once turned his gaze away, and, rising quickly, proceeded on his journey. But so much embarrassed did he feel at the idea of those charming eyes peeping at him through the leaves, that he suffered the money he had been carrying in his sleeve to fall, without being aware of it. A few moments later he heard the patter of light feet running behind him, and a woman's voice calling him by name. Turning his face in great surprise, he saw a comely servant-maid, who said to him, "Sir, my mistress bade me pick up and return to you this silver which you dropped upon the road."

Ming-Y thanked the girl gracefully, and requested her to convey his compliments to her mistress. Then he proceeded on his way in the perfumed silence, through the shadows that dreamed

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along the forgotten path, dreaming himself also, and feeling his heart beating with strange quickness at the thought of the beautiful being that he had seen.

It was just such another day when Ming-Y, returning by the same path, paused once more at the spot where the gracious figure had momentarily appeared before him. But this time he was surprised to perceive, through a long vista of immense trees, a dwelling that had previously escaped his notice—a country residence, not large, yet elegant to an unusual degree. The bright blue tiles of its curved and serrated double roof, rising above the foliage, seemed to blend their colour with the luminous azure of the day; the green and gold designs of its carved porticos were exquisite artistic mockeries of leaves and flowers bathed in sunshine. And at the summit of terrace steps before it, guarded by great porcelain tortoises, Ming-Y saw standing the mistress of the mansion—the idol of his passionate fancy—accompanied by the same waiting-maid who had borne to her his message of gratitude.

While Ming-Y looked, he perceived that their eyes were upon him; they smiled and conversed together as if speaking about him; and, shy though he was, the youth found courage to salute the fair one from a distance. To his astonishment, the young servant beckoned him to approach; and opening a rustic gate half veiled by trailing plants bearing crimson flowers, Ming-Y advanced along the verdant alley leading to the terrace, with mingled feelings of surprise and timid joy. As he drew near, the beautiful lady withdrew from sight; but the maid waited to receive him.

"Sir," she said, "my mistress understands you wish to thank her for the trifling service she recently bade me do you, and requests that you will enter the house, as she knows you already by repute, and desires to have the pleasure of bidding you good-day."

Ming-Y entered bashfully, his feet making no sound upon a matting elastically soft as forest moss, and found himself in a reception-chamber vast, cool, and fragrant with scent of blossoms freshly gathered. A delicious quiet pervaded the mansion; shadows of flying birds passed over the bands of light that fell through the half-blinds of bamboo; great butterflies, with pinions of fiery colour, found their way in, to hover a moment about the painted vases, and pass out again into the mysterious woods. And noiselessly as they, the young mistress of the mansion entered by another door, and kindly greeted the boy, who lifted his hands to his breast and bowed low in salutation. She was taller than he had deemed her, and slender as a lily; her black hair was interwoven with creamy blossoms; her robes of pale silk took shifting tints when she moved, as vapours change hue with the changing of the light.

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"If I be not mistaken," she said, when both had seated themselves, "my honoured visitor is none other than Tien-chou, surnamed Ming-Y, educator of the children of my respected relative, the High Commissioner Tchang. As the family of Lord Tchang is my family also, I cannot but consider the teacher of his children as one of my own kin."

"Lady," replied Ming-Y, not a little astonished, "may I dare to enquire the name of your honoured family, and to ask the relation which you hold to my noble patron?"

"The name of my poor family," responded the comely lady, "is *Ping*—an ancient family of the city of Tching-tou. I am the daughter of a certain Sië of Moun-hao; Sië is my name, likewise; and I was married to a young man of the Ping family, whose name was Khang. By this marriage I became related to your excellent patron; but my husband died soon after our wedding, and I have chosen this solitary place to reside in during the period of my widowhood."

There was a drowsy music in her voice, as of the melody of brooks, the murmurings of spring; and such a strange grace in the manner of her speech as Ming-Y had never heard before. Yet, on learning that she was a widow, the youth would not have presumed to remain long in her presence without a formal invitation; and after having sipped the cup of rich tea presented to him, he arose to depart. Sië would not suffer him to go so quickly.

"Nay, friend," she said, "stay yet a little while in my house, I pray you; for, should your honoured patron ever learn that you had been here, and that I had not treated you as a respected guest, and regaled you even as I would him, I know that he would be greatly angered. Remain at least to supper."

So Ming-Y remained, rejoicing secretly in his heart, for Sië seemed to him the fairest and sweetest being he had ever known, and he felt that he loved her more than his father and his mother. And while they talked the long shadows of the evening slowly blended into one violet darkness; the great citron light of the sunset faded out; and those starry beings that are called the Three Councillors, who preside over life and death and the destinies of men, opened their cold bright eyes in the northern sky.

Within the mansion of Sië the painted lanterns were lighted; the table was laid for the evening repast; and Ming-Y took his place at it, feeling little inclination to eat, and thinking only of the charming face before him. Observing that he scarcely tasted the dainties laid upon his place, Sië pressed her young guest to partake of wine; and they drank several cups together. It was a purple wine, so cool that the cup into which it was poured became covered with vapoury dew; yet it seemed to warm the veins with strange fire.

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To Ming-Y, as he drank, all things became more luminous as by enchantment; the walls of the chamber seemed to recede, and the roof to heighten; the lamps glowed like stars in their chains, and the voice of Sië floated to the boy's ears like some far melody heard through the spaces of a drowsy night. His heart swelled; his tongue loosened; and words flitted from his lips that he had fancied he could never dare to utter. Yet Sië sought not to restrain him; her lips gave no smile; but her long bright eyes seemed to laugh with pleasure at his words of praise, and to return his gaze of passionate admiration with affectionate interest.

"I have heard," she said, "of your rare talent, and of your many elegant accomplishments. I know how to sing a little, although I cannot claim to possess any musical learning; and now that I have the honour of finding myself in the society of a musical professor, I will venture to lay modesty aside, and beg you to sing a few songs with me. I should deem it no small gratification if you would condescend to examine my musical compositions."

"The honour and gratification, dear lady," replied Ming-Y, "will be mine; and I feel helpless to express the gratitude which the offer of so rare a favour deserves."

The serving-maid, obedient to the summons of a little silver gong, brought in the music and retired. Ming-Y took the manuscripts, and began to examine them with eager delight. The paper on which they were written had a pale yellow tint, and was light as a fabric of gossamer; but the characters were antiquely beautiful, as though they had been traced by the brush of Heï-song Ché-Tchoo himself—that divine Genius of Ink, who is no bigger than a fly, and the signatures attached to the compositions were of poets and musicians of the dynasty of Thang! Ming-Y could not repress a cry of delight at the sight of treasures so inestimable and so unique; scarcely could he summon resolution enough to permit them to leave his hands even for a moment.

"O Lady!" he cried, "these are veritably priceless things, surpassing in worth the treasures of all kings. This indeed is the handwriting of those great masters who sang five hundred years before our birth. How marvellously it has been preserved! Is not this the wondrous ink of which it was written: 'After centuries I remain firm as stone, and the letters that I make like lacquer'? And how divine the charm of this composition!—the song of Kao-pien, prince of poets, and Governor of Sze-tchouen five hundred years ago!"

"Kao-pien! darling Kao-pien!" murmured Sië, with a singular light in her eyes. "Kao-pien is also my favourite. Dear Ming-Y, let us chant his verses together, to the melody of old—the music of those grand years when men were nobler and wiser

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than today."

And their voices rose through the perfumed night like the voices of the wonder-birds—of the Fung-hoang—blending together in liquid sweetness. Yet a moment, and Ming-Y, overcome by the witchery of his companion's voice, could only listen in speechless ecstasy, while the lights of the chamber swam dim before his sight, and tears of pleasure trickled down his cheeks.

So the ninth hour passed; and they continued to converse, and to drink the cool purple wine, and to sing the songs of the years of Thang, until far into the night. More than once Ming-Y thought of departing; but each time Sië would begin, in that silver-sweet voice of hers, so wondrous a story of the great poets of the past, and of the women whom they loved, that he became as one entranced; or she would sing for him a song so strange that all his senses seemed to die except that of hearing.

And at last, as she paused to pledge him in a cup of wine, Ming-Y could not restrain himself from putting his arm about her neck and drawing her dainty head close to him, and kissing the lips that were so much ruddier than the wine. Then their lips separated no more; the night grew old, and they knew it not.

The birds awakened, the flowers opened their eyes to the rising sun, and Ming-Y found himself at last compelled to bid his lovely enchantress farewell. Sië, accompanying him to the terrace, kissed him fondly and said, "Dear boy, come hither as often as you are able—as often as your heart whispers you to come. I know you are not of those without faith and truth, who betray secrets; yet, being so young, you might also be sometimes thoughtless; and I pray you never to forget that only the stars have been the witness of our love. Speak of it to no living person, dearest; and take with you this little souvenir of our happy night."

And she presented him with an exquisite and curious little thing—a paper-weight in likeness of a sleeping lion, wrought from a yellow jade-stone. Tenderly the boy kissed the gift and the beautiful hand that gave it. "May the Spirits punish me," he vowed, "if ever I knowingly give you cause to reproach me, sweetheart!" And they separated with mutual vows.

That morning, on returning to the house of Lord Tchang, Ming-Y told the first falsehood which had ever passed his lips. He averred that his mother had requested him thenceforward to pass his nights at home, now that the weather had become so pleasant; for, though the way was somewhat long, he was strong and active, and needed both air and healthy exercise. Tchang believed all Ming-Y said, and offered no objection. Accordingly the lad found himself enabled to pass all his evenings at the house

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of the beautiful Sië.

Each night they devoted to the same pleasures which had made their first acquaintance so charming: they sang and conversed by turns; they played at chess; they composed rhymes upon the flowers, the trees, the clouds, the streams, the birds, the bees. But in all accomplishments Sië far excelled her young sweetheart.

Whenever they played at chess, it was always Ming-Y's general who was surrounded and vanquished; when they composed verses, Sië's poems were ever superior to his in harmony of word-colouring, in elegance of form, in classic loftiness of thought. And the themes they selected were always the most difficult—those of the poets of the Thang dynasty, and the songs they sang were also the songs of five hundred years before.

So the summer waxed and waned upon their love, and the luminous autumn came, with its vapours of phantom gold, its shadows of magical purple.

Then it unexpectedly happened that the father of Ming-Y, meeting his son's employer at Tching-tou, was asked by him: "Why must your boy continue to travel every evening to the city, now that the winter is approaching? The way is long, and when he returns in the morning he looks overcome with weariness. Why not permit him to slumber in my house during the season of snow?" And the father of Ming-Y, greatly astonished, responded: "Sir, my son has not visited the city, nor has he been to our house all this summer. I fear that he must have acquired wicked habits, and that he passes his nights in evil company—perhaps in gaming, or in drinking with the women of the flower-boats." But the High Commissioner returned:

"Nay! that is not to be thought of. I have never found any evil in the boy, and there are no taverns nor flower-boats nor any places of dissipation in our neighbourhood. No doubt Ming-Y has found some amiable youth of his own age with whom to spend his evenings, and only told me an untruth for fear that I would not otherwise permit him to leave my residence. I beg that you will say nothing to him until I shall have sought to discover this mystery; and this very evening I shall send my servant to follow after him, and to watch whither he goes."

Pelou readily assented to this proposal, and promising to visit Tchang the following morning, returned to his home. In the evening, when Ming-Y left the house of Tchang, a servant followed him unobserved at a distance. But on reaching the most obscure portion of the road, the boy disappeared from sight as suddenly as though the earth had swallowed him. After having long sought after him in vain, the domestic returned in great bewilderment to the house,

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and related what had taken place. Tchang immediately sent a messenger to Pelou.

In the meantime Ming-Y, entering the chamber of his beloved, was surprised and deeply pained to find her in tears. "Sweetheart," she sobbed, wreathing her arms around his neck, "we are about to be separated for ever, because of reasons which I cannot tell you. From the very first I knew this must come to pass, and nevertheless it seemed to me for the moment so cruelly sudden a loss, so unexpected a misfortune, that I could not prevent myself from weeping! After this night we shall never see each other again, beloved, and I know that you will not be able to forget me while you live; but I know also that you will become a great scholar, and that honours and riches will be showered upon you, and that some beautiful and loving woman will console you for my loss. And now let us speak no more of grief; but let us pass this last evening joyously, so that your recollection of me may not be a painful one, and that you may remember my laughter rather than my tears."

She brushed the bright drops away, and brought wine and music and would not suffer Ming-Y to speak for one moment of the coming separation. And she sang him an ancient song about the calmness of summer lakes reflecting the blue of heaven only, and the calmness of the heart also, before the clouds of care and of grief and of weariness darken its little world. Soon they forgot their sorrow in the joy of song and wine; and those last hours seemed to Ming-Y more celestial than even the hours of their first bliss.

But when the yellow beauty of morning came their sadness returned, and they wept. Once more Sië accompanied her lover to the terrace steps; and as she kissed him farewell, she pressed into his hand a parting gift—a little brush-case of agate, wonderfully chiselled, and fit for the table of a great poet. And they separated for ever, shedding many tears.

Still Ming-Y could not believe it was an eternal parting. "No!" he thought, "I shall visit her tomorrow; for I cannot live without her, and I feel assured that she cannot refuse to receive me."

Such were the thoughts that filled his mind as he reached the house of Tchang, to find his father and his patron standing on the porch awaiting him. Before he could speak a word, Pelou demanded:

"Son, in what place have you been passing your nights?"

Seeing that his falsehood had been discovered, Ming-Y dared not make any reply, and remained abashed and silent, with bowed head, in the presence of his father. Then Pelou, striking the boy violently with his staff, commanded him to divulge the secret; and at last, partly through fear of his parent, and partly through

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fear of the law which ordains that "*the son refusing to obey his father shall be punished with one hundred blows of the bamboo,*" Ming-Y faltered out the history of his love.

Tchang changed colour at the boy's tale. "Child," exclaimed the High Commissioner, "I have no relative of the name of Ping; I have never heard of the woman you describe; I have never heard even of the house which you speak of. But I know also that you cannot dare to lie to Pelou, your honoured father; there is some strange delusion in all this affair."

Then Ming-Y produced the gifts that Sië had given him—the lion of yellow jade, the brush-case of carven agate, also some original compositions made by the beautiful lady herself. The astonishment of Tchang was now shared by Pelou. Both observed that the brush-case of agate and the lion of jade bore the appearance of objects that had lain buried in the earth for centuries, and were of a workmanship beyond the power of living man to imitate; while the compositions proved to be veritable masterpieces of poetry, written in the style of the poets of the Dynasty of Thang.

"Friend Pelou," cried the High Commissioner, "let us immediately accompany the boy to the place where he obtained these miraculous things and apply the testimony of our senses to this mystery; the boy is no doubt telling the truth; yet his story passes my understanding." And all three proceeded towards the place of the habitation of Sië.

But when they had arrived at the shadiest part of the road, where the perfumes were most sweet and the mosses were greenest, and the fruits of the wild peach flushed most pinkly, Ming-Y, gazing through the groves, uttered a cry of dismay. Where the azure-tiled roof had risen against the sky, there was now only the blue emptiness of air; where the green and gold façade had been, there was visible only the flickering of leaves under the aureate autumn light; and where the broad terrace had extended, could be discerned only a ruin—a tomb so ancient, so deeply gnawed by moss, that the name graven upon it was no longer decipherable. The home of Sië had disappeared.

Suddenly the High Commissioner smote his forehead with his hand, and turning to Pelou, recited the well-known verse of the ancient poet Tching-Kou:

"*Surely the peach flowers blossom over the tomb of Sië-Thao.*"

"Friend Pelou," continued Tchang, "the beauty who bewitched your son was no other than she whose tomb stands there in ruin before us! Did she not say she was wedded to Ping-Khang? There is no family of that name but Ping-Khang is indeed the name of a broad alley in the city near. There was a dark riddle in all that

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she said. She called herself Sië of Moun-Hiao; there is no person of that name, there is no street of that name; but the Chinese characters *Moun* and *Hiao*, placed together, form the character, 'Kiao.'

"Listen! The alley Ping-Khang, situated in the street Kao, was the place where dwelt the great courtesans of the dynasty of Thang! Did she not sing the songs of Kao-pien? And upon the brush-case and the paper-weight she gave your son, are there not characters which read, '*Pure object of art belonging to Kao of the city of Pho-hai*'?

"That city no longer exists; but the memory of Kao-pien remains, for he was governor of the province of Sze-tchouen, and a mighty poet. And when he dwelt in the land of Chou, was not his favourite the beautiful wanton Sië—Sië-Thao, unmatched for grace among all the women of her day. It was he who made her a gift of those manuscripts of song; it was he who gave her those objects of rare art. Sië-Thao died not as other women die. Her limbs may have crumbled to dust; yet something of her still lives in this deep wood, her Shadow still haunts this shadowy place."

Tchang ceased to speak. A vague fear fell upon the three. The thin mists of the morning made dim the distances of green, and deepened the ghostly beauty of the woods. A faint breeze passed by, leaving a trail of blossom-scent—a last odour of dying flowers—thin as that which clings to the silk of a forgotten robe; and, as it passed, the trees seemed to whisper across the silence, "*Sië-Thao.*"

Fearing greatly for his son, Pelou sent the lad away at once to the city of Kwang-tchau-fu. And there in after years, Ming-Y obtained high dignities and honours by reason of his talents and his learning; and he married the daughter of an illustrious house, by whom he became the father of sons and daughters famous for their virtues and their accomplishments. Never could he forget Sië-Thao; and yet it is said that he never spoke of her—not even to his children when they begged him to tell them the story of two beautiful objects that always lay upon his writing table; a lion of yellow jade, and a brush-case of carven agate.

* * *

GOLDEN RULE

Better to remain silent and be thought a fool, than to speak out and remove all doubt.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

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DOOMSDAY DEFERRED

There was something there, something that waited quietly, knowingly, for what I would do next

by WILL F. JENKINS

IF I were sensible, I'd say that somebody else told me this story, and then cast doubts on his veracity. But I saw it all. I was part of it. I have an invoice of a shipment I made from Brazil, with a notation on it, " José Ribeiro's stuff." The shipment went through. The invoice, I noticed only today, has a mashed *soldado* ant sticking to the page. There is nothing unusual about it as a specimen. On the face of things, every element is irritatingly commonplace. But if I were sensible, I wouldn't tell it this way.

It began in Milhao, where José Ribeiro came to me. Milhao is in Brazil, but from it the Andes can be seen against the sky at sunset. It is a town the jungle unfortunately did not finish burying when the rubber boom collapsed. It is so far up the Amazon basin that its principal contacts with the outer world are smugglers and fugitives from Peruvian justice who come across the mountains, and nobody at all goes there except for his sins.

I don't know what took José Ribeiro there. I went because one of the three known specimens of *Morpho andiensis* was captured nearby by Böhler in 1911, and a lunatic millionaire in Chicago was willing to pay for a try at a fourth for his collection.

I got there after a river steamer refused to go any farther, and after four days more in a canoe with paddlers who had lived on or near river water all their lives without once taking a bath in it. When I got to Milhao, I wished myself back in the canoe. It's that sort of place.

But that's where José Ribeiro was, and in back-country Brazil there is a remarkable superstition that naturalists are eccentric but essentially honest. I do not explain it. I simply record it. And just as I was getting settled in a particularly noisome inn, José knocked on my door and came in.

He was a small brown man, and he was scared. He tried to hide that. The thing I noticed first was that he was clean. He was barefoot, but his tattered duck garments were immaculate, and the rest of him had been washed, and recently. In a town like Milhao, that was startling.

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"*Senhor*," said José in a sort of apologetic desperation, "I—beg your aid."

I grunted. José closed the door behind him and fumbled inside his garments. His eyes anxious, he pulled out a small cloth bundle. He opened it with shaking fingers. And I blinked. The lamplight glittered and glinted on the most amazing mass of tiny gold nuggets I'd ever seen. I hadn't a doubt it was gold, but even at first glance I wondered how on earth it had been gathered. There was no flour gold at all—that fine dust which is the largest part of any normal yield. Most of it was gravelly particles of pinhead size. There was no nugget larger than a half pea. There must have been five pounds of it altogether, though, and it was a rather remarkable spectacle.

"*Senhor*," said José tensely, "I beg that you will help me turn this into cattle! It is a matter of life or death."

I hardened my expression. Of course, in thick jungle like that around Milhao, a cow or a bull would be as much out of place as an Eskimo, but that wasn't the point. I had business of my own in Milhao. If I started gold buying or cattle dealing out of amiability, my own affairs would suffer. So I said in polite regret, "I am not a businessman, *senhor*, do not deal in gold or cattle either. To buy cattle, you should go down to São Pedro"—that was four days' paddle downstream, or considering the current perhaps three—"and take this gold to a banker. He will give you money for it if you can prove that it is yours. You can then buy cattle if you wish."

José looked at me desperately. Certainly half the population of Milhao—and positively the Peruvian-refugee half—would have cut his throat for a fraction of his hoard. He almost panted: "But, *senhor!* This would be enough to buy cattle in São Pedro and send them here, would it not?"

I agreed that at a guess it should buy all the cattle in São Pedro, twice over, and hire the town's wheezy steam launch to tow them upriver besides. José looked sick with relief. But, I said, one should buy his livestock himself, so he ought to go to São Pedro in person. And I could not see what good cattle would be in the jungle anyhow.

"Yet—it would buy cattle!" said José, gulping. "That is what I told—my friends. But I cannot go farther than Milhao, *senhor*. I cannot go to São Pedro. Yet I must—I need to buy cattle for—my friends! It is life and death! How can I do this, *senhor?*"

Naturally, I considered that he exaggerated the emergency.

"I am not a businessman," I repeated. "I would not be able to help you." Then at the terrified look in his eyes I explained, "I am here after butterflies."

He couldn't understand that. He began to stammer, pleading. So I explained.

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" There is a rich man," I said wryly, " who wishes to possess a certain butterfly. I have pictures of it. I am sent to find it. I can pay one thousand milreis for one butterfly of a certain sort. But I have no authority to do other business, such as the purchase of gold or cattle."

José looked extraordinarily despairing. He looked numbed by the loss of hope. So, merely to say or do something, I showed him a colour photograph of the specimen of *Morpho andiensis* which is in the Goriot collection in Paris. Bug collectors were in despair about it during the war. They were sure the Nazis would manage to seize it. Then José's eyes lighted hopefully.

" *Senhor !* " he said urgently. " Perhaps my—friends can find you such a butterfly ! Will you pay for such a butterfly in cattle sent here from São Pedro, *senhor ?* "

I said rather blankly that I would, but— Then I was talking to myself. José had bolted out of my room, leaving maybe five pounds of gravelly gold nuggets in my hands. That was not usual.

I went after him, but he'd disappeared. So I hid his small fortune in the bottom of my collection kit. A few drops of formaldehyde, spilled before closing up a kit of collection bottles and insects, is very effective in chasing away pilferers. I make use of it regularly.

Next morning I asked about José. My queries were greeted with shrugs. He was a very low person. He did not live in Milhao, but had a clearing, a homestead, some miles upstream, where he lived with his wife. They had one child. He was suspected of much evil. He had bought pigs, and taken them to his clearing and behold he had no pigs there ! His wife was very pretty, and a Peruvian had gone swaggering to pay court to her, he had never come back. It is notable, as I think of it, that up to this time no ant of any sort has come into my story. Butterflies, but no ants. Especially not *soldados* —army ants. It is queer.

I learned nothing useful about José, but I had come to Milhao on business, so I stated it publicly. I wished a certain butterfly, I said. I would pay one thousand milreis for a perfect specimen. I would show a picture of what I wanted to any interested person, and I would show how to make a butterfly net and how to use it, and how to handle butterflies without injuring them. But I wanted only one kind, and it must not be squashed.

The inhabitants of Milhao became happily convinced that I was insane, and that it might be profitable insanity for them. Each person leaped to the nearest butterfly and blandly brought it to me. I spent a whole day explaining to bright-eyed people that matching the picture of *Morpho andiensis* required more than that the number of legs and wings should be the same. But, I repeated, I would pay

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one thousand milreis for a butterfly exactly like the picture. I had plenty of margin for profit and loss, at that. The last time a *Morpho andiensis* was sold, it brought five thousand pounds sterling at auction. I'd a lot rather have the money, myself.

José Ribeiro came back. His expression was tense beyond belief. He plucked at my arm and said, " *Senhor*," and I grabbed him and dragged him to my inn.

I hauled out his treasure. " Here ! " I said angrily. " This is not mine ! Take it ! "

He paid no attention. He trembled. " *Senhor*," he said, and swallowed. " My friends—my friends do not think they can catch the butterfly you seek. But if you will tell them—" He wrinkled his brows. " *Senhor*, before a butterfly is born, is it a little soft nut with a worm in it ? "

That could pass for a description of a cocoon. José's friends—he was said not to have any—were close observers. I said so. José seemed to grasp at hope as at a straw.

" My—friends will find you the nut which produces the butterfly," he said urgently, " if you tell them which kind it is and what it looks like."

I blinked. Just three specimens of *Morpho andiensis* had ever been captured, so far as was known. All were adult insects. Of course nobody knew what the cocoon was like. For that matter, any naturalist can name a hundred species—and in the Amazon valley alone—of which only the adult forms have been named. But who would hunt for cocoons in jungle like that outside of Milhao ?

" My friend," I said sceptically, " there are thousands of different such things. I will buy five of each different kind you can discover, and I will pay one milreis apiece. But only five of each kind, remember ! "

I didn't think he'd even try, of course. I meant to insist that he take back his gold nuggets. But again he was gone before I could stop him. I had an uncomfortable impression that when I made my offer, his face lighted as if he'd been given a reprieve from a death sentence. In the light of later events, I think he had.

I angrily made up my mind to take his gold back to him next day. It was a responsibility. Besides, one gets interested in a man—especially of the half-breed class—who can unfeignedly ignore five pounds of gold. I arranged to be paddled up to his clearing next morning.

It was on the river, of course. There are no footpaths in Amazon-basin jungle. The river flowing past Milhao is a broad deep stream perhaps two hundred yards wide. Its width seems less because of

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the jungle walls on either side. And the jungle is daunting. It is all trees and vines as seen from the stream, but it is more than that. Smells come out, and you can't identify them. Sounds come out, and you can't interpret them. You cut your way into its mass, and you see nothing. You come out, and you have learned nothing. You cannot affect it. It ignores you. It made me feel insignificant.

My paddlers would have taken me right on past José's clearing without seeing it, if he hadn't been on the river bank. He shouted. He'd been fishing, and now that I think, there were no fish near him, but there were some picked-clean fish skeletons. And I think the ground was very dark about him when we first saw him, and quite normal when we approached. I know he was sweating, but he looked terribly hopeful at the sight of me.

I left my two paddlers to smoke and slumber in the canoe. I followed José into the jungle. It was like walking in a tunnel of lucent green light. Everywhere there were tree trunks and vines and leaves, but green light overlay everything. I saw a purple butterfly with crimson wing tips, floating abstractedly in the jungle as if in an undersea grotto.

Then the path widened, and there was José's dwelling. It was a perfect proof that man does not need civilization to live in comfort. Save for cotton garments, an iron pot and a machete, there was literally nothing in the clearing or the house which was not of and from the jungle, to be replaced merely by stretching out one's hand. To a man who lives like this, gold has no value. While he keeps his wants at this level, he can have no temptations. My thoughts at the moment were almost sentimental.

I beamed politely at José's wife. She was a pretty young girl with beautiful regular features. But, disturbingly, her eyes were as panic-filled as José's. She spoke, but she seemed tremblingly absorbed in the contemplation of some crawling horror. The two of them seemed to live with terror. It was too odd to be quite believable. But their child—a brown-skinned three-year-old quite innocent of clothing—was unaffected. He stared at me, wide-eyed.

"*Senhor*," said José in a trembling voice, "here are the things you desire, the small nuts with worms in them."

His wife had woven a basket of flat green strands. He put it before me. And I looked into it tolerantly, expecting nothing. But I saw the sort of thing that simply does not happen. I saw a half bushel of cocoons!

José had acquired them somehow in less than twenty-four hours. Some were miniature capsules of silk which would yield little butterflies of wing spread no greater than a mosquito's. Some were sturdy fat cocoons of stout brown silk. There were cocoons which cunningly mimicked the look of bird droppings, and cocoons cleverly concealed

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in twisted leaves. Some were green—I swear it—and would pass for buds upon some unnamed vine. And—

It was simply, starkly impossible. I was stupefied. The Amazon basin has been collected, after a fashion, but the pupa and cocoon of any reasonably rare species is at least twenty times more rare than the adult insect. And these cocoons were fresh! They were alive! I could not believe it, but I could not doubt it. My hands shook as I turned them over.

I said, "This is excellent, José! I will pay for all of them at the rate agreed on—one milreis each. I will send them to São Pedro today, and their price will be spent for cattle and the bringing of the cattle here. I promise it!"

José did not relax. I saw him wipe sweat off his face.

"I—beg you to command haste, *Senhor*," he said thinly.

I almost did not hear. I carried that basket of cocoons back to the river-bank. I practically crooned over it all the way back to Milhao. I forgot altogether about returning the gold pellets. And I began to work frenziedly at the inn.

I made sure, of course, that the men who would cart the parcel would know that it contained only valueless objects like cocoons. Then I slipped in the parcel of José's gold. I wrote a letter to the one man in São Pedro who might have sense enough to attend to the affair for me. And I was almost idiotically elated.

While I was making out the invoice that would carry my shipment by refrigerated air express from the nearest airport it could be got to, a large ant walked across my paper. One takes insects very casually in back-country Brazil. I mashed him, without noticing what he was. I went blissfully to start the parcel off. I had a shipment that would make history among bug collectors. It was something that simply could not be done!

The fact of the impossibility hit me after the canoe with the parcel had started downstream. How the devil those cocoons had been gathered—

The problem loomed larger as I thought. In less than one day, José had collected a half bushel of cocoons, of at least one hundred different species of moths and butterflies. It could not be done! The information to make it possible did not exist! Yet it had happened. How?

I had to find out. I bought a pig for a present and had myself ferried up to the clearing again. My paddlers pulled me up stream with languid strokes. The pig made irritated noises in the bottom of the canoe.

I landed on the narrow beach and shouted. Presently José came through the tunnel of foliage that led to his house. He thanked

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me, dry-throated, for the pig. I told him I had ordered cattle sent up from São Pedro. I told him humorously that every ounce of meat on the hoof the town contained would soon be on the way behind a wheezing steam launch. José swallowed and nodded numbly. He still looked like someone who contemplated pure horror.

We got the pig to the house. José's wife sat and rocked her child, her eyes sick with fear. I probably should have felt embarrassed in the presence of such tragedy, even if I could not guess at its cause. But instead, I thought about the questions I wanted to ask. José sat down dully beside me.

I said blandly, "Your friends are capable naturalists, José. I am much pleased. Many of the 'little nuts' they gathered are quite new to me. I would like to meet such students of the ways of nature."

José's teeth clicked. His wife caught her breath. She looked at me with an oddly despairing irony. It puzzled me. I looked at José, sharply. And then the hair stood up on my head. My heart tried to stop. Because a large ant walked on José's shoulder, and I saw what kind of ant it was.

"My God!" I said shrilly. "*Soldados!* Army ants!"

I acted through pure instinct. I snatched up the baby from its mother's arms and raced for the river. One does not think at such times. The *soldado* ant, the army ant, the driver ant, is the absolute and undisputed monarch of all jungles everywhere. He travels by millions of millions, and nothing can stand against him. He is ravening ferocity and inexhaustible number. Even man abandons his settlements when the army ant marches in, and returns only after he has left—to find every bit of flesh devoured to the last morsel from the earwigs in the thatch to a horse that may have been tethered too firmly to break away. The army ant on the march can and does kill anything alive, by tearing the flesh from it in tiny bites, regardless of defence. So—I grabbed the child and ran.

José Ribeiro screamed at me, "*No, Senhor! No!*"

He sat still and he screamed. I'd never heard such undiluted horror in any man's voice.

I stopped. I don't know why. I was stunned to see José and his wife sitting frozen where I'd left them. I was more stunned, I think, to see the tiny clearing and the house unchanged. The army ant moves usually on a solid front. The ground is covered with a glistening, shifting horde. The air is filled with tiny clickings of limbs and mandibles. Ants swarm up every tree and shrub. Caterpillars, worms, bird nestlings snakes, monkeys unable to flee—anything living becomes buried under a mass of ferociously rending small forms which tear off the living flesh in shreds until only white bones are left.

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But José sat still, his throat working convulsively. I had seen *soldados* on him. But there were no *soldados*. After a moment José got to his feet and came stumbling towards me. He looked like a dead man. He could not speak.

"But look!" I cried. My voice was high-pitched. "I saw *soldado* ants! I saw them!"

José gulped by pure effort of will. I put down the child. He ran back to his mother.

"*Si si.* Yes," said José, as if his lips were very stiff and his throat without moisture. "But they are—special *soldados*. They are—pets. Yes. They are tame. They are my—friends. They—do tricks, *senhor*. I will show you!"

He held out his hand and made sucking noises with his mouth. What followed is not to be believed. An ant—a large ant, an inch or more long—walked calmly out of his sleeve and onto his outstretched hand. It perched there passively while the hand quivered like an aspen leaf.

"But yes!" said José hysterically. "He does tricks, *senhor!* Observe! He will stand on his head!"

Now, this I saw, but I do not believe it. The ant did something so that it seemed to stand on its head. Then it turned and crawled tranquilly over his hand and wrist and up his sleeve again.

There was silence, or as much silence as the jungle ever holds. My own throat went dry. And what I have said is insanity, but this is much worse. I felt Something waiting to see what I would do. It was, unquestionably, the most horrible sensation I had ever felt. I do not know how to describe it. What I felt was—not a personality but a mind. I had a ghastly feeling that Something was looking at me from thousands of pairs of eyes, that it was all around me.

I shared, for an instant, what that Something saw and thought. I was surrounded by a mind which waited to see what I would do. It would act upon my action. But it was not a sophisticated mind. It was murderous, but naïve.

That is what I felt. The feeling doubtless has a natural explanation which reduces it to nonsense, but at the moment I believed it. I acted on my belief. I am glad I did.

"Ah, I see!" I said in apparent amazement. "That is clever, José! It is remarkable to train an ant! It was absurd to be alarmed. But—your cattle will be on the way, José! They should get here very soon! There will be many of them!"

Then I felt that the mind would let me go. And I went.

My canoe was a quarter mile downstream when one of the paddlers lifted his blade from the water and held it there, listening. The other stopped and listened, too. There was a noise in the jungle. It was mercifully far away, but it sounded like a pig. I have heard the

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squalling of pigs at slaughtering time, when instinct tells them of the deadly intent of men and they try punily to fight. This was not that sort of noise. It was worse; much worse.

I made a hopeless spectacle of myself in the canoe. Now, of course, I can see that, from this time on, my actions were not those of a reasoning human being. I did not think with proper scientific scepticism. It suddenly seemed to me that Norton's theory of mass consciousness among social insects was very plausible. Bees, says Norton, are not only units in an organisation. They are units of an organism. The hive or the swarm is a creature—one creature—says Norton. Each insect is a body cell only, just as the corpuscles in our blood stream are individuals and yet only parts of us.

His book is not accepted by naturalists generally, but there in the canoe, going down-river from José's clearing, I believed it utterly.

I believed that an army-ant was as much a single creature as a sponge. I believed that the Something in José's jungle clearing—its body cells were *soldado* ants—had discovered that other creatures perceived and thought as it did. Nothing more was needed to explain everything. An army-ant creature, without physical appendages, could know what its own members saw and knew and felt. It should need only to open its mind to perceive what other creatures saw and knew and felt.

The frightening thing was that when it could interpret such unantlike sensations, it could find its prey with a terrible infallibility. It could flow through the jungle in a streaming, crawling tide of billions of tiny stridulating bodies. It could know the whereabouts and thoughts of every living thing around it. And if it came upon a man, it could know his thoughts, too. It could perceive in his mind vast horizons beyond its former ken. It could know of food—animal food—in quantities never before imagined. It could, intelligently, try to arrange to secure that food.

It had.

But if so much was true, there was something else it could do. The thought made the blood seem to cake in my veins. I began frantically to thrust away the idea. The Something in José's clearing hadn't discovered it yet. But pure terror of the discovery had me drenched in sweat when I got back to Milhao.

All this, of course, was plainly delusion. It was at least a most unscientific attitude. But I'd stopped being scientific. I even stopped using good sense. Believing what I did, I should have got away from there as if all hell were after me. But the Something in José's clearing may already have been practising its next logical step without knowing it. Maybe that's why I stayed.

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Because I did stay in Milhao. I didn't leave the town again, even for José's clearing. I stayed about the inn, half-heartedly dealing with gentry who tried every known device, except seeking the *Morpho andiensis*, to extract a thousand milreis from me.

Mostly they offered mangled corpses which would have been useless for my purpose even if they'd been the butterfly I was after. No argument would change their idea that I was insane, nor dash their happy hope of making money out of my hallucination that butterflies were worth money. But I was only halfhearted in these dealings, at best. I waited feverishly for the cattle from São Pedro. I was obsessed.

I couldn't sleep. By day I fought the thought that tried to come into my head. At night I lay in the abominable inn—in a hammock, because there are no beds in back-country Brazilian inns, and a man would be a fool to sleep in them if there were—and listened to the small, muted, unidentifiable noises from the jungle. *And* fought away the thought that kept trying to come into my mind. It was very bad.

I don't remember much about the time I spent waiting. It was purest nightmare. But several centuries after the shipment of the cocoons, the launch from São Pedro came puffing asthmatically up the reaches of the river. I was twitching all over, by that time, from the strain of not thinking about what the Something might discover next.

I didn't let the launch tie up to shore. I went out to meet it in a canoe, and I carried my collection kit with me, and an automatic pistol and an extra box of cartridges. I had a machete too. It was not normal commercial equipment for consummating a business deal, but I feverishly kept my mind on what I was going to do. The Something in José's clearing wouldn't be made suspicious by that. It was blessedly naïve.

The launch puffed loudly and wheezed horribly, going past Milhao between tall banks of jungle. It towed a flatboat on which were twenty head of cattle—poor, dispirited, tick-infested creatures. I had them tethered fast. My teeth chattered as I stepped on the flatboat. If the Something realized what it could do— But my hands obeyed me. I shot a dull-eyed cow through the head. I assassinated an emaciated steer. I systematically murdered every one. I was probably wild-eyed and certainly fever-thin and positively lunatic in the eyes of the Brazilian launch crew. But to them bug-hunters are notoriously eccentric to madness.

I was especially close to justifying their belief because of the thought that kept trying to invade my mind. It was, baldly, that if without physical linkage the Something knew what its separate body

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cells saw, then it also controlled what they did. And if it could know what other beasts saw and knew, then by the same process it could control what *they* did. It held within itself, in its terrifying innocence, the power to cause animals to march docilely and blindly to it and into the tiny maws of its millions of millions of parts.

As soon as it realized the perfectly inescapable fact, it could increase in number almost without limit by this fact alone. More, in the increase, its intelligence should increase too. It should grow stronger, and be able to draw its prey from greater distances. The time should come when it could incorporate men into its organism by a mere act of will. They would report to it and be controlled by it. And of course they would march to it and drive their livestock to it so it could increase still more and grow wiser and more powerful still.

I grew hysterical, on the flatboat. The thought I'd fought so long wouldn't stay out of my mind any longer. I slashed the slain animals with the machete until the flatboat was more gruesome than any knacker's yard. I sprinkled everywhere a fine white powder from my collection kit—which did not stay white where it fell, but turned red—and pictured the Amazon basin taken over and filled with endlessly marching armies of *soldado* ants. I saw the cities emptied of humanity, and the jungle of all other life. And then, making whimpering noises to myself, I pictured all the people of all the world loading their ships with their cattle and then themselves—because that was what the Something would desire—and all the ships coming to bring food to the organism for which all earth would labour and die.

José Ribeiro screamed from the edge of the jungle. The launch and the flatboat were about to pass his clearing. The reek of spilled blood had surrounded the flatboat with a haze of metallic-bodied insects. And José, so weakened by long terror and despair that he barely tottered, screamed at me from the shore line, and his wife added her voice pipingly to echo his cry.

Then I knew that the Something was impatient and eager and utterly satisfied, and I shouted commands to the launch, and I got into the canoe and paddled ashore. I let the bow of the canoe touch the sand, and I think that, actually, everything was lost at that moment, and that the Something knew what I could no longer keep from thinking. It knew its power as I did. But there were thousands of flying things about the flatboat load of murdered cattle, and they smelled spilt blood, and the Something in the jungle picked their brains of pure ecstasy. Therefore, I think, it paid little heed to José or his wife or me. It was too eager. And it was naïve.

"José," I said with deep cunning, "get into the canoe with

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your wife and baby. We will watch our friends at their banquet."

There were cries from the launch. I had commanded that the flatboat be beached. The Brazilians obeyed, but they were upset. I looked like a thing of horror from the butchering I had done. I put José and his family on the launch, and I tried to thrust out my mind to the Something in the jungle. I imagined a jungle tree undermined —a little tree, I specified—to fall in the river.

The men of the launch had the flatboat grounded when a slender tree trunk quivered. It toppled slowly outwards, delayed in its fall by tendrils of creeper that had to break. But it fell on the flatboat and the carcasses of slaughtered cattle. The rest was automatic. Army ants swarmed out of the thin tree trunk. The gory deck of the flatboat turned black with them. Cries of "*Soldados!*" arose in the launch. The towline was abandoned instantly.

I think José caused me to be hauled up into the launch, but I was responsible for all the rest. We paused at Milhao, going downstream, exactly long enough to tell that there were *soldados* in the jungle three miles upstream. I got my stuff from the inn. I paid. Hysterically I brushed aside the final effort of a whiskery half-breed to sell me an unrecognizable paste of legs and wings as a *Morpho andiensis*. Then I fled.

After the first day or so I slept most of the time, twitching. At São Pedro I feverishly got a fast passage on a steamer going downstream. I wanted to get out of Brazil, and nothing else, but I did take José and his family on board.

I didn't talk to him, though. I didn't want to. I don't even know where he elected to go ashore from the steamer, or where he is now. I didn't draw a single deep breath until I had boarded a plane at Belem and it was airborne and I was on the way home.

Which was unreasonable. I had ended all the danger from the Something in José's clearing. When I slaughtered the cattle and made that shambles on the flatboat's deck, I spread the contents of a three-pound, formerly airtight can of sodium arsenite over everything. It is wonderful stuff. No mite, fungus, mould or beetle will attack specimens preserved by it. I'd hoped to use a fraction of a milligram to preserve a *Morpho andiensis*. I didn't. I poisoned the carcasses of twenty cattle with it. The army ants which were the Something would consume those cattle to bare white bones. Not all would die of the sodium arsenite, though. Not at first.

But the Something was naïve. And always, among the army ants as among all other members of the ant family, dead and wounded members of the organism are consumed by the sound and living. It is like the way white corpuscles remove damaged red cells from our human blood stream. So the corpses of army ants—

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soldados—that died of sodium arsenite would be consumed by those that survived, and they would die, and their corpses in turn would be consumed by others that would die . . .

Three pounds of sodium arsenite will kill a lot of ants anyhow, but in practice not one grain of it would go to waste. Because no *soldado* corpse would be left for birds or beetles to feed on, so long as a single body cell of the naïve Something remained alive.

So that is that. There are times when I think the whole thing was a fever dream, because it is plainly unbelievable. If it is true—why, I saved a good part of South American civilization. Perhaps I saved the human race, for that matter. Somehow, though, that doesn't seem likely. But I certainly did ship a half bushel of cocoons from Milhao, and I certainly did make some money out of the deal.

I didn't get a *Morpho andiensis* in Milhao, of course. But I didn't do badly. When those cocoons began to hatch, there were actually four beautiful *andiensis* in the crop. I anæsthetized them with loving care. They were mounted under absolutely perfect conditions. But there's an ironic side light on that. When there were only three known specimens in the collections of the whole world, the last *andiensis* sold for five thousand pounds sterling. But with four new ones perfect and available, the price broke, and I got only one thousand, one hundred and sixty pounds apiece! I'd have got as much for one!

Which is the whole business. But if I were sensible I wouldn't tell about it this way. I'd say that somebody else told me this story, and then I'd cast doubts on his veracity.

* * *

DOUBLE DEALING

Intrigued by a newspaper advertisement of a canary that could sing every tune in the world, a man hurried to the pet shop to give the bird an audition. To the man's delight, the canary more than lived up to his advance notices. With effortless ease he sang the Harry Lime theme, Mendelssohn's Spring Song, an excerpt from Aïda and the Air from Suite Number Three by Bach.

"How much?" said the man.

"Sixty pounds," said the proprietor, "and you'll have to buy this other bird with him."

"Sixty pounds is steep enough," complained the man. "Why must I buy this other bird as well?"

"The canary needs him," said the proprietor. "That's his arranger."

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AT CLOSE OF EVE

Insomnia never comes to a man who has to get up at six o'clock exactly

E. HUBBARD

Sleep, my little ugling,
Daddy's gone a-smuggling,
Daddy's gone to Roscoff in the "Mevagissey Maid",
A sloop of ninety tons,
With ten brass carriage-guns,
To teach the King's ships manners and respect for honest trade.

Hush, my joy and sorrow,
Daddy'll come tomorrow,
Bringing baccy, tea and snuff and brandy home from France;
And he'll run the goods ashore
While the old Collectors snore,
And the black dragooners gamble in the purlieus of Penzance.

Rock-a-by, my honey,
Daddy's making money:
You shall be a gentleman and sail with privateers
With a silver cup for sack,
A blue coat on your back,
With diamonds on your finger-bones and gold rings in your ears.

CROSBIE GARSTIN, *Cornish Lullaby*

Wakeful Influence

There is one stirring hour unknown to those who dwell in houses, when a wakeful influence goes abroad over the sleeping hemisphere, and all the outdoor world are on their feet. It is then the cock first crows, not this time to announce the dawn, but like a cheerful watchman speeding the course of night. Cattle awake on the meadows; sheep break their fast on dewy hillsides, and change to a new lair among the ferns; and houseless men, who have lain down with the fowls, ope their dim eyes and behold the beauty of the night.

R. L. STEVENSON, 1850-1894

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Before the Dawn

Somewhile before the dawn I rose, and stept
Softly along the dim way to your room,
And found you sleeping in the quiet gloom,
And holiness about you as you slept.
I knelt there ; till your waking fingers crept
About my head, and held it. I had rest
Unhoped this side of Heaven, beneath your breast.
I knelt a long time, still, nor even wept.

RUPERT BROOKE, 1887-1915

Night Thoughts

He hath consumed a whole night in lying looking to his great tow, about which he hath seen Tartars and Turks, Romans and Carthaginians, fight in his imagination.

BEN JONSON, 1572-1637
Conversations with William Drummond of Hawthornden

The Watcher

Oh sleep ! it is a gentle thing,
Beloved from pole to pole !
To Mary Queen the praise be given !
She sent the gentle sleep from Heaven,
That slid into my soul.

S. T. COLERIDGE, 1772-1834,
The Ancient Mariner

And Now, Turn Over

When you find an unwillingness to rise early in the morning, make this short speech to yourself : I am getting up now to do the business of a man ; and am I not of humour for going about that I was made for, and for the sake of which I was sent into the world ? Was I then designed for nothing but to doze and keep warm beneath the counterpane ? Well but this is a comfortable way of living. Granting that : were you born only for pleasure ? Were you never to do anything ? Is not action the end of your being ?

MARCUS AURELIUS, A.D. 121-180

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No Monopoly

" God bless the man who first invented sleep ! "
So Sancho Panza said, and so say I :
And bless him, also, that he didn't keep
His great discovery to himself ; nor try
To make it—as the lucky fellow might—
A close monopoly by patent-right !

The time for honest folks to be a-bed
Is in the morning, if I reason right ;
And he who cannot keep his precious head
Upon his pillow till it's fairly light,
And so enjoy his forty morning winks,
Is up to knavery ; or else—he drinks !

'Tis beautiful to leave the world awhile
For the soft visions of the gentle night ;
And free, at last, from mortal care or guile,
To live as only in the angels' sight,
In sleep's sweet realm so cosily shut in,
Where, at the worst, we only dream *of sin !*

JOHN G. SAXE, 1816-1887

Sweet Anodyne

Take the palest Carrots you can get, and scrape a sufficient Quantity of them to afford Scrapings enough to make a Cataplasm, of about 2 Fingers, of 2 Inches broad, and of the thickness of a Half-Crown Piece of Silver, or thereabouts. Let the patient apply this in a Piece of double Linnen to his Throat, so that it may reach to the Jugular Vessels on each Side, when he goes to Bed, and let it lie on all Night (for it will not easily grow dry); if the first application do not prevail, 'tis to be apply'd the following Night; and so, a third and fourth Time, if Need require.

THE HON. ROBERT BOYLE, 1627-1691,
Medicine for Sleep

Epilogue

" Human nature is peculiar," Claudia said to David as they rolled into bed a little before dawn.
" Very peculiar." He put his arm around her.
" It's so frightfully late," she murmured.
" It hardly pays to go to sleep," he said.

ROSE FRANKEN, *The Marriage of Claudia*

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THE SHAKESPEAREAN THEORY

Extracted from the secret diary of a horse-holder, and deciphered for modern reading

by A. A. MILNE

THURSDAY. *April* 23, *an. dom.* 1594. With this my Birth Day I begin a new volume. Well, I am 30. How many more years have I in which to discharge the rich cargo of my mind? Never have I been so laden with notions, and with words, words, words in which to set them free. If I could stop thinking for a little, then I could write as I wish to write: if I could stop writing for a little, then I could think. But thoughts and words tumble in my head so restlessly, day and night, that no sooner does a thought present itself than pat! there comes a line of verse for it. This is not the way to write, this is not the way to think. And I am 30, and have little time left.

May 1. Dick Burbage grows more difficult every day. There are no half-shades in his character, as there are (far too many) in mine. To him a thing is Yes or No. Either a play is a tragedy, in which case all the leading characters must be strangled, poisoned, or stabbed (himself last of all): or it is not a tragedy, in which case they must all marry each other willy-nilly, the villains, if any, repenting at the church door. Also he has this fixed idea that no actor can leave the stage without saying a rhymed couplet first. Nothing in nature corresponds with this; one can leave the stage at any time. Also his notion of humour is hard to bear. The scenes between rustic clowns which he inserts into my plays to tickle the ears of the groundlings are so lacking in true comedy that I can no longer listen to them at rehearsal. When I am not to be found, they say I am "holding a horse for somebody" outside the theatre. This is because, the first time I got up and left the rehearsal, I made the excuse that I had promised to hold a man's horse for him. If only I had my own theatre, and could produce and write my plays as I wish to!

On reading this through I see that I might have begun, "Will Shakespeare grows more difficult every day."

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May 3. I suddenly found myself writing an Essay this morning. Of Innovations. It is good discipline for me to write prose. Short sentences packed with meaning. No getting carried away by my own music. I must do more of this. I have an idea for one on Youth and Age.

May 10. Dick is a good fellow, and I have been unjust to him. He tells me now that these, as they are called, comic scenes with which he peppers my plays are not written by him but by an obscure lawyer called Bacon; who is persuaded that Nature meant him for a playwriter. I asked Dick why an obscure lawyer called Bacon should have a right of entry into my plays, and he said that Bacon was a very clever young man of good family who would probably be Lord Chancellor one day; in which case one would wish not to have offended him. Dear Dick! To lick absurd pomp, and crook the pregnant hinges of the knee—well, as he must do it, he must. But if I had my own theatre . . . Wrote an Essay on Fortune.

May 14. Last night I went through my plays and read again what are called the comic scenes. The strange thing is that this man Bacon is reputed a wit in his conversation. No, that is not strange. The pen and mouth are separate instruments. The strange thing is that a man of high birth should neglect the life which he knows, and insist on writing of common people of whom he is ignorant.

On reading this it came to me that I, a country man of middle-class birth, write mostly of Kings and Courts.

May 15. Have begun a play of rustic life, to be called, I think, "A Village Revel," and to contain many true comedy scenes for lowly characters.

June 25. I have been much occupied with my play, Dick wanting me to set the scene in Athens, as we have the dresses from *Titus Andronicus*. I know not what my rustics will be doing in Athens, and have therefore called it *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, which excuses all. I have nearly enough Essays for a book.

July 1. My book is ready. Dick is opposed to my putting it out over my own name. He says that I am known as a playwriter and a poet, and that it is not good for his theatre that I should play tricks with my reputation. I fear he is right. So I must think of a name for myself . . . "Essays by John Falstaff." There is an air about that.

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July 2. Curious. All day I have been seeing him as a tall, stout, roystering fellow. Then I do not see how he could have written these Essays.

July 9. For the last week I have been working at a play on the Life of Henry IV. It is written round a jolly, fat fellow called Sir John Falstaff, I think my best character so far. He came into my head complete, so soon as I had written down the name. I must think of another author for my book.

July 15. I have met this man Bacon. He came to the theatre when I was with Dick. He is a shifty-eyed creature, with a lean and hungry look. He has three ambitions, as I read him. To be Lord Chancellor—which he may be, since he is apt at intrigue; to be known as a writer—which he will never be, as he cannot write; and to make money—which he is well qualified to do, having no scruples. Let no such man be trusted.

July 20. "Essays by William Page." "Essays by John Oldcastle." "Essays by—"

July 22. I do not like this idea of putting out these Essays under a made-up name. I would rather that Dick Burbage lent his name to them, for then at least he could recommend the book to his acquaintance. John Oldcastle can do nothing to sell so much as one copy. I did but write them as a curb to my style, and for my own instruction, and if now they be of profit to others, and make a little money for myself, I care not who fathers them.

July 23. Met Bacon again. I have no doubt but that I judged his character aright.

July 25. I think Bacon is the man.

July 31. Bacon comes to my lodging tomorrow.

Aug. 1. It is done! My book is to come out as "Essays, by Francis Bacon." He has read them, and is proud to think that he wrote them—as, in truth, he does almost persuade himself. It is a deception after his own heart, for it gives him all that he most wants. I offered him one half of the money; but in the end he has given me his Note (so worded that he dare not repudiate it) for One Hundred Pounds within six months of its putting out. This, without doubt, will be at the moment which he considers most favourable to his advancement; for there is a tide in the

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affairs of all men, which, taken at the flood, leads most quickly to fortune. But I care not for that, for now it is off my mind, and I can give myself to my Great Project.

Aug. 2. Began *The Advancement of Learning.*

* * *

SPRING FEVER

Whatever others may sing of spring,
I wish to sing there is no such thing.
Spring is simply a seasonal gap
When winter and summer overlap.
What kind of a system is it, please,
When in March you parch, and in May you freeze?
Yet give some people a glimpse of a crocus,
And all their perspective gets out of focus.
They shed their ulsters to walk uphill in,
And forget their sulfa and penicillin.
I suppose it's the same in Patagonia;
Today spring fever, tomorrow pneumonia.

Yes, others may sing in praise of spring,
I wish to sing there is no such thing.
Spring is a phantom, spring is a fraud,
I shall not, will not be overawed.
What if a puddle or two has thawed,
And the kittenish zephyr is velvet-pawed,
And the day is long as the night is broad,
And the robins approve and the frogs applaud,
And lovers haste to get mother-in-lawed?
I still refuse to be overawed—
Except when the clouds drift light as gossamer,
When the dogwood progresses from blossom to blossomer . . .

Let others refuse to sing of spring,
I wish to sing it's a splendid thing.
Let others of diet be particular,
Existing pallid and perpendicular;
We're rosy as pippins and twice as circular,
Not perpendicular, but pippindercular.

OGDEN NASH, *Versus*

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MIRACLE OF SAINT ANTHONY

A story without a moral

by RICHARD ARVAY

AT a recent auction in one of the largest London salesrooms an incident occurred which for many days remained the subject of amused conversation among art dealers and collectors. Not one among these regular visitors to the auction rooms, whose occupation or passionate activity is the never ceasing chase after art treasures, could remember a similar episode.

On the day in question I myself had come with the intention of bidding for a Boldrini. But as soon as I entered the overcrowded room I realized that this would be no day for bargains. The public was there—the outsiders who senselessly drove the prices high, for they bought pictures with no idea of their value, but merely because they appealed to them.

As I stood near the door, studying the crowd, my rambling glance became fixed on a man in one of the back rows. I knew that head, so much was certain, but when and where had I seen it before? I had always been proud of the fact that any face, seen even only once, was registered in my brain as if on a photographic plate, classified according to name and other data. Who was that man in the back row?

The auctioneer started proceedings at last with his customary monotonous drawl. Three clerks watched closely and reported the gestures and cries of the bidders. The day was, as I have said, taken over by the outsiders. Prices were called out by members of the audience, whereas in the usual gathering of dealers and collectors not a sound was heard. A head nodded gently, a hand moved—that was all. A lift of the eyebrow was sufficient. The clerks, familiar with the faces and habits of the bidders, were able to interpret the minutest muscular activity.

Surprisingly enough, the first pictures brought relatively low prices. A fairly good Courbet went for half its real value. A Caselli, a fifteenth-century Italian master, was turned over to its new owner for a ridiculously small sum.

Perhaps I would have luck with my Boldrini? Perhaps the prices would not go so high as I had feared? The atmosphere in the

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salesroom was not the one that the outsiders usually brought with them. The tension, the excitement, the gambling room fever, which was sometimes diffused through the room like a red mist, upsetting the most cool, calculating brain and subtly persuasive to bidding, was missing today.

The next picture presented for bidding did not really belong to the day's catalogue. It was a copy.

"Number twenty-seven," announced the auctioneer. "Copy of a painting by Alessandro Magnori—*The Temptations of Saint Anthony*."

It seemed to me that despite the objectivity with which he made his announcement, an attentive listener could detect a certain contempt in his voice. Or perhaps it was only my imagination.

"May I open at twenty-five? Do we say twenty-five? Who will make it twenty-five? . . . Well, then, fifteen?"

A hand was raised.

"We have fifteen . . . Thank you, sir. Is there any advance?"

"Twenty," corrected one of the clerks, who had somewhere detected the movement of an eyebrow or some other signal.

"Twenty is the bid . . . Is there any advance? I have twenty . . . May I make it guineas?"

And then the fantastic happened.

The man in the next-to-the-last row, whose identity had so puzzled me, got to his feet and announced, "I bid two thousand, three hundred and sixty-four pounds, two shillings and twopence for this picture."

There was a moment of complete silence. Everyone turned towards the back of the room to stare at the bidder. Murmured conversation and laughter began here and there. People asked one another who the stranger was.

"No jokes, please," said the auctioneer. His tone was solemn, reproachful. And he repeated, "Number twenty-seven, copy of a painting by Alessandro Magnori. Twenty pounds is the bid . . . Is there any advance?"

"I bid two thousand, three hundred and sixty-four pounds, two shillings and twopence," repeated the man at the back. He raised his voice and was quite obviously annoyed that his bid had not been taken seriously.

There was another pause. The three clerks looked in bewilderment at the auctioneer, who was himself so dumbfounded that he required time to recover his speech. The man was unquestionably insane.

"Twenty pounds is the bid."

"I bid two thousand, three hundred and sixty-four pounds, two shillings and twopence."

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"Well, then, if you insist, two thousand, three hundred and sixty-four pounds, two shillings."

"— and twopence," the madman corrected.

"— and twopence. Is there any advance? Last call? Sold at two thousand, three hundred and sixty-four pounds, two shillings and twopence."

At a signal from the auctioneer one of the clerks hurried over to the victorious client at the back and began to whisper with him. We understood, of course, what was happening. He was asking for a deposit as a guarantee that he would actually take the picture.

"A cheque!" we heard the madman scream. "Out of the question."

"You must at least leave a deposit," argued the clerk with growing irritation.

"I don't see why," retorted the singular customer. "Why should I make a deposit? I'll pay the entire amount now, in cash!" And he drew from his pocket a thick wad of notes which had apparently been prepared for this moment.

The clerk, of course, resumed at once his polite whisper, undoubtedly explaining that the money could be paid to the cashier. They both left the room.

The auction could not proceed. Business was interrupted for the moment by an eruption of noise such as had never before invaded this salon. People roared with laughter, called out to friends across the room, and inquired of neighbours as to the identity of the madman. As for me, from the moment I had heard his voice, I was more than ever convinced I had come across him somewhere, and I tortured my memory in an effort to remember where and when it had been.

Just then I heard Lewis, sitting in the row ahead of me, say to Burns, "He's obviously not an Englishman. Judging from his accent, I'd say he's French."

"French? Ridiculous," was the answer. "He's never been near France. I have a good ear for accents. I say Hungarian—from Budapest, in fact. If he's not Hungarian, I'll—I'll eat . . . what shall I eat? My hat, if you like."

Hungarian . . . French . . . The answer suddenly flashed through my mind. Of course—it was Antal Pal! Paris . . . twenty years ago . . . the Hungarian painter. But then he had worn a small sleek moustache.

I stood up. "Gentlemen," I said to Burns and Lewis, "don't bet, and don't eat any hats; it's not necessary. You're both right. I know the man; he's a Hungarian who lived in Paris for years."

I tried to leave but Burns held me tightly by the arm. "You must tell us more about him. What is his name?"

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"Antal Pal. But you must excuse me. I want to try to catch him."

Burns accompanied me to the door. "Is he really so rich?"

"That I don't know. When I first met him, he was a pauper, as I was myself. But sometimes he had lots of money and then he threw it away with both hands."

"A pauper . . . lots of money . . . that doesn't make sense."

"He was something of a genius. There were so many stories. He always had new ideas for raising money. A really gifted fellow and a wonderful friend. Why, he supported the entire Hungarian artist colony for months, the time he had his idea for the painting factory."

"A painting factory?"

"Yes. I worked in it, too. He was my boss."

Burns and I had by now reached the staircase. "I must go back now," he said, "but you'll have to tell me more about this man."

I hurried downstairs and found Antal Pal with the cashier. He was counting the money out one note at a time. I didn't want to interrupt and dropped on to a chair near the door. I sat for some time, waiting.

Like stills from an old film, scenes from my Bohemian days in Paris passed through my mind. Yes, life had not been too easy the time I chanced to meet Antal in the *Rôtisserie de la Reine Pedâuque*. We met, not among guests in the restaurant, but in the kitchen, washing up.

I had come to Paris to gain fame as a painter, and six weeks later I was indeed a renowned artist, but at the draining board. And there in the kitchen I met Antal.

"I expect to stay here," he announced as he began to work, "only until I hit on the right idea for making money, not a second longer. You must know that I have experimented before this, and have learned that the worse things are for me, the quicker come the good ideas."

We laughed about it. This is customary for beginners. Each tries to apologize to himself for the fact that he is washing dishes. He feels so inferior. The first few days are particularly bad.

One Sunday evening Antal had his idea. In his excitement and delight he dropped a trayload of plates he happened to be holding. Perhaps it was even intentional; no one can say. He was sacked immediately.

Several weeks later he returned to the *Reine Pedâuque*, but as a guest. He brought a gay crowd along with him. Jean, who served their table, excitedly reported on every detail. They were celebrating and champagne flowed. I watched through a crack in the kitchen door.

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There sat Antal and several others whom I recognized. And of course there were a number of pretty girls.

After a while Antal came out to the kitchen. I happened to be carrying a heaped-up tray. He knocked it from my hands without a word. "You're discharged," he cried. "You start tomorrow in my business. Take off your apron and come out to our table. We're celebrating the opening of our painting factory."

Yes, the painting factory. That was a comical business. We produced oil paintings on the assembly line. Of course we copied only the most renowned masters. Fifteen painters worked ten hours a day. One traced the designs on the canvas. Each painter had to work on a different colour. One the red tones, another the green, another the blue, and so forth. I did yellow and orange shades.

In this manner it was possible to produce twenty *Mona Lisa*'s or twelve copies of Rembrandt's *The Night Watch* in one day. And the impressionists—they were a game for us; thirty Manets or Cézannes was an average daily quota. I imagine that even today I could close my eyes and paint the *Sunflowers* of Van Gogh. Only the yellow and orange shades, of course.

The most difficult and important phase of the whole process came at the end. Any errors were corrected, and the pictures were varnished in such a way as to give them the appearance of age. Our chief customer happened to be a Turk, who sold the copies throughout the Orient as originals. When on the back of an occasional picture we stamped "Louvre" or "British Museum," the Turk told his customers the picture had been stolen and had to be disposed of cheaply.

Antal was a master at the finishing technique. With a few strokes he could change the entire character of a picture. He used to boast, "I have merely to look at a picture, and out of sheer fright it will immediately turn a hundred years older."

And now I saw him again. He was not tall and slender as I had always described him. Actually he seemed rather short and the years had given him weight. The hungrily burning eyes had been sated somehow, and the cheeks had filled out. In fact, he looked so different from my by now legendary hero that it was not surprising that I had not immediately recognized the original.

Antal had finished counting out the money, and now stood looking about him with a bored expression on his face, while the cashier checked the notes. Suddenly his eyes remained fixed on me. He stared, and as I nodded and got up from my chair, he rushed over towards me.

"I beg your pardon," he said, "but were you ever a dish-washer in Paris?"

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"Yes indeed," I replied, "but only in the finest restaurants."

"Of course it's you," he cried. "How could I doubt it? The master of the yellow shades." He embraced me with emotion, then looked me over. "A little older, a little heavier—but not much changed. I've thought of you so often. Are you still painting?"

"No, I'm an art dealer, have been for a number of years. And you? Still running the painting factory?" I asked jokingly.

To my amazement he nodded. "Painting factory is correct, but somewhat different from Paris. We make art prints. The shop is in Leeds. I have my own process, and two hundred employees, doing well."

"That was a fine time in Paris. I was very unhappy when I had to return to England. And I remember someone hearing from someone that our factory didn't last much longer."

"No. Shortly after your departure we gave up the business. It was partly my fault. I left Paris, too. There was a girl . . ."

"For a change," I interrupted, laughing.

"This time it was very serious and I decided it was better to disappear for a while." He was silent for a moment. "And it was apparently for the best. Fate often leads us along strange roads, and we stumble without realizing it into good luck or bad." He seemed to be sunk in his thoughts. "You are probably surprised to hear such words from my mouth," he continued with an embarrassed sm le. "It doesn't suit me. But the truth is that you've found me in an unaccustomed solemn mood today. And since this is so, and we are old friends, I will gladly tell you about it." He looked round. "But not here."

"I know a little place round the corner where they have good French wine."

"French wine!" he exclaimed. "What are we waiting for?"

Antal drank the first glass slowly and with evident enjoyment. "Were you upstairs at the bidding, before we met?" he asked at last.

I nodded.

"The people must have thought I was mad."

I was puzzled. "You don't consider the *Saint Anthony* an original? I examined it thoroughly before the auction began; there can be no doubt that it is a copy. You can tell from the canvas; the weave is no more than forty years old."

"The canvas is eighteen years old."

"How can you be so specific?"

"I myself painted the copy," he said slowly.

I stared at him without comprehension.

He filled his glass. "Do you remember Giselle? She also worked

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in our factory. Painted the greys. Or rather, she messed up the backgrounds. I always had to go over her work."

"Weren't you rather enamoured with her?"

"Yes, I fell in love with her, and finally I managed to convince myself that I couldn't live without her. You know how these things develop. There was a Spaniard who was also interested in her and he pursued and tortured her with demonstrations of his love. Since she would have nothing to do with him he became madly jealous and tried to kill her. Two knife attacks failed only by a miracle. She didn't want to run the risk of a third attempt and talked me into fleeing from Paris with her. We went to Vienna. There she confided that the Spaniard was her lawfully wedded husband—purely incidental information.

"Things didn't go well for me in Vienna and she quickly wearied of living without money. After four weeks she left me flat and went to the United States with an American whom she had met in some hotel lobby. It was the first and only time a woman had left me and the thrust went deep.

"For weeks I remained in a state of complete lethargy. When at last my will to live returned I concentrated all my energies on one idea: to find Giselle again. And for this I needed money.

"You remember now, I always said that the most important thing in life was to have the right idea? I walked the streets for hours, looking at posters and window displays, and then sat in some café brooding and racking my brains, waiting for the sudden flash of genius. And then one day as I was looking through a newspaper I noticed an advertisement: 'Room to let in distinguished household. Antique furniture.' I leaped from my chair—I had my idea at last!

"The first room I went to look at was not the right one. But after a number of days of climbing stairs and ringing bells I found what I wanted. An elderly lady, living alone, the widow of the Austrian General von Frank, one-time adjutant to Emperor Franz Josef, wished to let an elegantly furnished room. Her house with its antique furniture and the genuine old pictures on the walls fairly breathed culture and wealth. Obviously it was not need which compelled Frau von Frank to let a room. She was merely afraid of being alone in the big house.

"I was invited by my elderly hostess to join her in a cup of coffee, and we chatted for a long time. I extended myself to be charming and amiable, and won her sympathy completely by telling the story of my unhappy love for Giselle, who had deserted me.

"There is no tested recipe for capturing a young woman's heart. One may be impressed by intelligence, another intrigued by money, for many it is enough that they are young. There is no

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formula. But to win the affection of an elderly lady there is a sure technique. You let her mother you. I discovered very quickly that Frau von Frank was looking not for a tenant, but for a son.

"I moved in that very day, determined to carry through my plans."

Antal paused for a moment, finished a glass of wine, and continued his story:

"One of Frau von Frank's ancestors had been the military governor of Milan, at the time that part of Italy still belonged to Austria. He had brought back a painting which was the showpiece of the house, *The Temptations of Saint Anthony*. It hung in the room which I was now to occupy, and full of pride, Frau von Frank had drawn my attention to it. She explained that it was a genuine Magnori, a seventeenth century Italian painter. Her grandfather had given a hundred gold ducats for it in Milan, an appallingly high price for the period.

"I didn't believe the story of the hundred gold ducats. No secret had been made of the devices employed by the military of that time to acquire pictures and other *objets d'art*. However, I kept my opinions to myself and dutifully expressed my astonishment: 'One hundred gold ducats! I understand nothing about pictures, but I find this one wonderful.'

"Well, it had not been absolutely necessary for Frau von Frank thus to impress on me the high value of the picture. I had noticed the *Saint Anthony* as soon as I had walked into the room, and I realized at once that there before me was a genuine old Italian master. Even the frame was of the same period. This was what I had been searching for.

"The next morning I set to work. I locked the door and set up my easel. You know how quickly I can copy a picture; however, I took plenty of time with the *Saint Anthony*. I had never before worked with such thoroughness and such ambition and when finally, after twelve days, I placed Alessandro Magnori's initials in the corner of the canvas and threw aside my brush, I sensed the joy and satisfaction that accompanies the creation of a work of art. I was convinced that no one would be able to differentiate between the original and the copy without examining the canvas. I exchanged the pictures, and the following evening I smuggled the original out of the house and shipped it to an art dealer in London with instructions to sell it as quickly as possible.

"To my shame I must admit that not for a second did I have the sense of doing something wrong. Frau von Frank was a wealthy woman and all the members of her family lived in the most

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comfortable circumstances. My copy hung in the genuine frame and differed in no way from the original. True, some day in the future the falsification would be exposed. In fifty or a hundred years, when one of her grandchildren or great-grandchildren would be forced to sell the Magnori because he had squandered his inheritance on horses and women, he would make the surprising discovery that the governor-general of Milan had paid a hundred gold ducats for a copy, and the young good-for-nothing, who had probably never worked, would have to take life seriously at last. And this would not only be of no harm but would actually be a contribution to maturing him. No, I had no pangs of conscience.

" A few weeks later, I received word from London that the picture had been sold at a much higher price than I had dared to anticipate. Immediately arranging to have part of the money transferred to me, I set all the wheels in motion for my departure for England.

" Frau von Frank was very sad when I told her I was planning to leave Vienna. She confessed that despite the briefness of our acquaintance she had come to love me like a son. She helped with all the preparations for my journey and even accompanied me to the station.

" As she embraced me at parting she whispered, ' If things should not go well for you over there and you should need money, wire me. Remember that you have someone in Vienna who feels towards you like a mother.'

" I am not a sentimental person, but this farewell speech shattered my spiritual equilibrium. As the train pulled out I sat and wept like a small boy. For the first time in my life I experienced regret. My guilty conscience plagued me and I toyed with the idea of writing to Frau von Frank immediately after my arrival in London, and confessing everything. I began at once to construct the letter in my mind, but it was hard to find the right words, and the search for appropriate expression so wearied me that I fell asleep. When I awoke an hour later, I found that my equilibrium had returned. For now to my pleasure I discovered an enchanting young girl sitting opposite me in the compartment, whose presence I had not even noticed earlier.

" All that I've told you up to now is merely the prologue to my story, and took place long ago," commented Antal. " As for England, I had money, was able to look about the country, to make tests, to busy myself with the development of my patents. Before two years had passed I had established my own factory for the manufacture of art reproductions, which has developed from small beginnings to a very respectable business.

" But then came the German occupation of Austria. Newspapers reported innumerable horrors, among others that all monarchists

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were arrested and taken to concentration camps. I thought with uneasy concern of Frau von Frank and her family. After all, her late husband had at one time been adjutant to Emperor Franz Josef.

" I arranged for a Swiss lawyer to go to Austria. After some delay he reported that my anxieties were unfortunately not without foundation. All members of the von Frank family had been first arrested, then deported and their property confiscated. And an important Nazi functionary was living in Frau von Frank's house.

" Following a lengthy search, she was at last discovered in Paris by one of my agents. He reported that the only real emotion remaining to her was the desire to come to England where somewhere a niece of hers was living. I made arrangements for her to come and took care of all the details of her journey.

" I even advertised in an effort to locate her niece, now the only living member of her family, and discovered the young girl here in London. She lived in modest circumstances, so that it was necessary for me to arrange to make a regular contribution for Frau von Frank's needs. Of course, the good old lady had no idea what impelled me to such generosity. After all, I had lived for such a short time in her home in Vienna.

" On the day of her arrival, I went to Dover and met the boat. ' Blessed be the day on which you entered my house,' she said as we greeted each other. And I stood there ashamed and was unable to speak.

" Her once grey hair had turned white, but she looked well and healthy in spite of her age. But I noticed a peculiar change in her. The events in Austria had apparently affected her. She had become quite religious.

" ' It is due to a miracle that I am still alive today,' she told me. ' Yes, one of God's miracles had to occur to get me out of Austria alive. All members of my family were taken prisoner. They came for me, too. They took my money and my jewellery. They made it quite plain that I should " vanish " from Austrian soil as soon as possible. I did not hesitate and started to pack. They forbade me to take anything of value from my home. But how should I make a living abroad ? I decided to take one genuine picture with me, and chose the picture of *Saint Anthony* painted by Magnori.

" ' It was not a very big picture and fairly easy to hide the rolled canvas at the bottom of my trunk. I thought that they probably would not search an old woman's luggage too carefully, even though I knew about the frontier controls. But directly after my departure a Nazi official moved into my house. He found the empty frame and wired the frontier officials to detain me. I was more than a little surprised by the politeness which met me at the border. " Frau von Frank ? Splendid ! We have been expecting you.

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Come with us." I had to leave my compartment and they searched my luggage. Of course they found the picture at once.

" ' Two men accompanied me on my way back to Vienna, where they delivered me to the prison on the Elizabeth Promenade.

" ' " You wanted to take a valuable piece of art to a foreign country," said the police commissioner. " You know the punishment ? "

" ' " I did not know that the picture was of any great value," I lied.

" ' " Oh ! You had no idea of its value ? "

" ' " I took it with me only because I am extremely fond of it. I don't know if it is valuable and I don't believe it is."

" ' " So, you don't believe it is valuable," the officer mimicked in a malicious manner. " Well, we shall see. We shall turn over the picture to an expert. If it is of no value, you can continue your journey tomorrow, but should it be genuine then you will go in another direction—concentration camp. Take her away."

" ' My case was hopeless. The director of the Imperial Museum of Fine Art in Vienna had years ago examined the picture and found it to be a genuine Magnori. There had even once been an article published in an art magazine about this one Magnori in private possession.

" ' I withdrew to a corner of the cell. I have never been religious, but there are situations in life where one feels so lost and helpless that one feels the need to pray. I felt that in spite of the people round me I was alone, alone with God. I had a long talk with Him in that cell in the prison on the Elizabeth Promenade. We made a pact. If— But this is more or less private between God and myself and nobody's business.

" ' The next morning I was called before the commissioner. He had the picture in his hand when I entered. " The expert has examined the picture. Why do you carry stuff like this abroad ? It is a reproduction valued at about fifteen marks." He was flicking through his papers and therefore did not see that I almost fainted. " I would advise you to continue your journey as soon as possible," he said, " before we change our minds and keep you here for good. Take her away. And take your junk along," he called and threw the canvas after me. Yes, a miracle must have happened.' And, when she said this, a mysterious smile was on her lips. ' Of course I thought that the expert had done it out of pity or another motive unknown to me. But this was not the case ! The genuine picture actually had changed to a reproduction. When I reached Paris I tried to sell it. Three art dealers looked it over and all three declared it to be a reproduction.

" ' You will smile, but I believe a miracle has occurred, and my

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belief goes even farther. I am convinced that one day, perhaps only after my death, the picture will change back into the genuine one. Yes, I do believe this.'

" You can perhaps imagine how deeply I was moved by this narrative," Antal continued, " nor did I have the courage to tell her the truth. I found the embarrassing confession too difficult, and so I did not disturb her deep conviction that a miracle had taken place.

" I made it a practice to visit her every time business brought me to London, and always brought some small present for her and her niece. When several days ago I returned from a rather lengthy business trip to the States, I was shocked to learn that my old friend had died during my absence from England. The news moved me, but despite the fact that I was deeply shaken I could not refrain from asking what had happened to the painting.

" Her niece was very much surprised by the interest I displayed. ' But it's not a genuine Magnori, just a copy, and of no value at all,' she explained. ' You probably noticed that my aunt was rather strange during the last few years. She had the fixed idea that one day this picture would be sold for a high price. She must certainly have told you the story of her miraculous escape.'

" I nodded.

" ' Well then,' she continued with an indulgent smile, ' if you've heard about the miracle of *Saint Anthony* you know the whole story. You probably remember that she had the fantastic notion that the process of transformation from copy back to original would be completed after her death. And so she has left orders in her will for the picture to be sold and the proceeds turned over to her solicitor, who has strict instructions as to how the money shall be used—undoubtedly for charitable purposes. You know that I'm working and have been very busy. I really haven't had the time to get in touch with the solicitor. And what purpose would it serve ? The picture is the only thing of value which she left, and the experts have assured me that it can't possibly bring more than a few pounds. But I've entered it for auction nevertheless. She shall have her wish ; she believed so strongly.'

" ' Your amused smile is really out of order,' I said seriously. ' I also believe in it.'

" And so the gentle old lady's faith has been justified. It is true that the copy was not transformed into the original, but the price it brought at the bidding was as large as if the painting had been genuine. I had entered the salesroom with the intention of paying the same amount for the picture which I had received from the museum so long ago, not one penny less.

" That's why I insisted on two shillings and twopence, and was

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not satisfied with two shillings. The money had certainly been destined by Frau von Frank for philanthropic purposes, and after all, one can't bargain with God; no, one can't expect to make such deals with Him. I felt that He had been generous enough with me these many years, and had waited patiently for me to find a way to repay my debt.

" So there you have the story of the miracle of *Saint Anthony*," finished Antal, and refilled his glass. " And now perhaps you can understand why I am in such a serious mood. Today I have been able to draw a line under a very questionable chapter of my life."

When Antal and I parted we exchanged addresses, with the intention of arranging another meeting soon. I was more than a little surprised, however, to receive a phone call from him the following afternoon. He sounded excited.

" I'm very much upset," he told me. " It looks as if the story of the picture isn't finished yet. Can you imagine—Frau von Frank's solicitors notified me today that their client, out of gratitude for the paltry monthly allowance I had made her, has made me her heir. All that money will come back to me. And the picture, too. It's really very disturbing. I can't imagine what the dear Lord is planning for me, but I'm beginning to understand that to conclude a bargain with Him is more complicated than I ever dreamed."

* * *

THE TALISMAN

The story is told of a farmer in an Eastern European country who was visited by a Secret Police officer and a rival farmer who had entrenched himself well in the favour of the new régime. Both were armed with maps and plans. The farmer asked what right they had to trample on his fields without permission, but the rival farmer drew out an impressive looking document, covered with seals and stamps.

" With this," he said, " I am safe. *Nothing* can harm me when I carry this."

The farmer was beginning to walk heavily away when he remembered his bull in the next field. Stealthily he opened the gate, and the bull, with a joyous bellow, charged through. The intruders ran for dear life.

Just before they were out of earshot, the farmer called out to them anxiously.

" Show him the paper," he shouted.

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H. V. MORTON writes about

Ships at Night

THREEPENCE. I gave it to the conductor at Ludgate Circus and left the omnibus at Limehouse. If I had paid fifty pounds for my ticket I could not have travelled farther from the London that most of us know. The West India Dock Road is as glorified by darkness as the native quarter of an Oriental city; its meanness is swallowed up in shadow; the jutting lamps in dark side lanes leer adventure; the lit windows near the roofs of rickety houses hold a sordid promise of thrill . . .

A lascar shuffled past; a group of three vague Asiatics turned suddenly into a side alley. I had half a mind to break my tryst with the dock police, but, without warning—I came face to face with high spiked gates, and before me lay the docks at night.

" There's a bit of a river mist," said the police inspector, handing me an electric torch as we stepped out into pitch blackness.

In this lonely land of darkness, full of titanic shadows, where huge ships lift themselves into the night like mountains, you realize the startling variety that one great city can hold.

We turned a corner of a shed. Three yellow portholes shone in the side of a large West Indiaman. Suddenly, the inspector stopped in his tracks and flashed a moon of white light into a corner. In this darkness a man stood blinking in the torchlight . . .

" So it's you, is it ? " said the inspector. " What's up ? "

The man gathered himself to tell us what was " up "; and in this he was entirely successful, for he had developed the gift of fluent expression. His problem was whether the great big blinkin' teak ship would blinkin' well put out at this time of blinkin' night and collide with his blinkin' barge in the fog.

It appeared to him that if the blinkin' people responsible for the unloading of London cargoes could blinkin' well tip their ships upside down and empty the stuff on the wharf in five minutes and load them again in five minutes they'd be off again to blinkin' Jamaica before you could say Jack blinkin' Robinson, and, strike him pink . . .

Before either of us could do this a melancholy " moo " sounded in the mist: the deep moo of a doubtful siren. It electrified our blinkin' friend. He called on all the deities who safeguard the barges of lightermen and leapt at random into the darkness . . .

From *The Nights of London*

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THE CAPTIVE

Sometimes I'd sit there dreaming, picking out the way I'd take if ever I did get away

by CAROLINE GORDON

WE were up long before day and were loading the horses at first dawn streak. Even then Tom didn't want to go.

"This ginseng don't have to get to the station," he said, "and as for the money it'll bring, we can get along without that."

"We've been without salt for three weeks now," I told him.

"There's worse things than doing without salt," Tom said.

I knew if he got to studying about it he wouldn't go and I was bound he should make the trip, Indians or no Indians. I slapped the lead horse on the rump. "Go along," I said. "I'd as soon be scalped now and have done with it as keep on thinking about it all the time."

Tom rode off without saying anything more, and I went on in the house and set about my morning work. The children were all stirring by that time. Joe felt mighty big to be the only man on the place. He was telling them what he'd do if Indians came.

"You'd better hush about that," I said. "Can't you get your mind off Indians a minute?"

All that morning, though, I was thinking about what Tom had said and wishing he hadn't had to go. It seemed like I was riding with him most of the day.

"Now he's at West Fork," I'd say to myself, and then a bit later, "He'll be about at the crossroads now or maybe Sayler's Tavern." I knew, though, it wasn't much use to be following him that way in my mind. It'd be pretty dark before he could get home, and my thinking about it wouldn't hurry him.

It was around ten o'clock that I heard the first owl hooting. Over on the mountain, it seemed. Joe was in the yard feeding the chickens and he stopped stock still and threw his head back.

"You hear that, Mammy?" he asked.

I knew then that there must be something wrong with the call, or a boy like Joe wouldn't have noticed it.

I spoke up sharp, though. "I heard it," I said, "and I could hear a heap of other things if I had time to stand around with

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my ears open. How long you reckon it's going to take you to get those chickens fed?"

We both went on about our business without more talk, but all the time I was saying to myself that if I could get through this and see Tom Wiley riding in at the gate one more time I'd be content to bide without salt the rest of my natural life. I knew it wouldn't do to give way before the children, though, and I kept them busy doing one thing and another till dinner time.

It began to rain while we were eating and it rained a long time. After it stopped raining the fog settled down, so thick you could hardly see your hand before you. And all the time the owls were calling. Calling back and forth from one mountain to another. My littlest girl, Martha, got scared, so I made all the children stay in the house and play by the fire whilst I started on a piece of cloth I'd had in the loom a long time and never could seem to finish. I'd put a stripe through it and I was going to dye it red and make both the girls a dress out of that piece before the winter set in.

By that time the fog had risen as high as the top of the ridges and the whole house was swallowed up in it. The children kept teasing, saying it was real dark now and couldn't they have a candle.

"Yes," I said, "we're here all by ourselves and you want to go lighting candles, so they can't help finding the house."

One of the girls started crying. "Who's coming?" she said. "Mammy, who d'you think's coming?"

I saw I'd got them stirred up and I'd have to settle them, for I couldn't stand to be worrying like I was and have the children crying. I gave them a lump of sugar apiece and got them all playing. I made out that I had the headache and if they were going to sing they'd have to sing low. They were playing "Hog Drovers":

Hog-drovers, hog-drovers, hog-drovers we air,
A-courtin' your daughter so sweet and so fair.
Kin we git lodgin' here, O here,
Kin we git lodgin' here?

I got them frolicking about and went back to my work. But I couldn't get my mind off something a man said to me once when we were out hunting on the Hurricane, and I made him go right in on a bear without waiting for the other menfolks to come up.

"You're brash, Jinny," he said, "and you always been lucky, but one of these times you going to be too brash."

Sitting there listening to them owls calling, and wondering how much longer it would be before Tom got home, I got to thinking that maybe this was the time I was too brash. For I knew well there wasn't another woman in the settlements would have

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undertaken to stay on that place all day with nothing but a parcel of children. Still, I said to myself, it's done now and there's no undoing it. And the first thing I know, Tom will be back, and tomorrow morning it'll fair up, and I'll be thinking what a goose I was to get scared over nothing.

The children were still singing:

Oh, this is my daughter that sets by my lap.
No pig-stealing drover kin git her from Pap.
You can't git lodgin' here, O here,
You can't git lodgin' here.

I got up and looked out of the window. It seemed to me that the fog was lifting a little. A man was coming up the path. I knew it was a white man by the walk, but I didn't know it was John Borders till he stepped up to the door.

The first thing he asked was where was Tom.

"Gone to the station with a load of ginseng," I told him. "I'm expecting him back now any minute."

He stood there looking off towards the mountain. "How long them owls been calling?" he asked.

"Off and on all day," I said, "but owls'll hoot, dark days like this."

"Yes," he said, "and some owls'll holler like wolves and gobble like turkeys and every other kind of varmint. Jinny, you better git them children and come over to our house. Ain't no telling when Tom'll be back."

Just then an owl hooted and another one answered him from somewhere on top of the ridge. We both listened hard. It sounded like a real owl calling to his mate, but I was good and scared by that time and I thought I'd best go over to the Borderses'. It was my judgment, though, that there wasn't any hurry. Indians hardly ever come round before nightfall.

I told John that if he'd wait till I'd fastened up the stock I'd go back with him. He said that while I was doing that he'd walk out in the woods a little way. He'd been looking all day for some strayed sheep and hadn't found trace of them, but he thought they might be herded up in that gully by the spring.

He went off down the path and I fastened the front door and went out the back way. I didn't fasten the back door, but I kept my eye on it all the time I was worrying with the cattle. Joe was along helping me. The cow was standing there at the pen; so I stopped and milked her while Joe went up in the triangle to look for the heifer. He found her and brought her up to the cowpen just as I finished milking. We fastened both cows up in the stable and Joe went over and saw that all the chickens were up and

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fastened the door on them. Then we started back to the house with the milk.

We were halfway up the path when we heard the Indians holler. We started for the house on a dead run. I could see Indians in the yard, and one Indian was coming around the house to the back door. I ran faster and slipped in the door ahead of him. Joe was right behind me. The room was so full of Indians that at first I couldn't see any of my children. The Indians was dancing around and hollering and hacking with their tomahawks. I heard one of the children screaming but I didn't know which one it was. An Indian caught me around the waist but I got away from him.

I thought, I have got to do something. I fell down on my knees and crawled around between the Indians' legs, they striking at me all the time, till I found Martha, my littlest one, in the corner by the loom. She was dead and I crawled on a little way and found Sadie. She was dead, too, with her skull split open. The baby was just sitting there holding on to the bar of the loom. I caught him in my bosom and held him up to me tight; then I got to my feet. Joe was right behind me all the time and he stood up when I did. But an Indian come up and brained him with a tomahawk. I saw him go down and I knew I couldn't get any more help from him.

I couldn't think of anything to do; so I worked my way over towards the door, but there was two or three Indians standing on the porch and I knew there was no use running for it. I just stood there holding the baby while the Indians pulled burning logs out of the fire on to the floor. When the blaze had sprung up they all come out on to the porch.

I made a break and got some way down the path, but an Indian run after me and caught me. He stood there, holding me tight till the other Indians come up; then he laid his hand on my head and he touched the baby, too. It seemed he was claiming me for his prisoner. He had rings on his arms and ankles, and trinkets in his ears. I knew he was a chief and I thought he must be a Shawnee. I could understand some of what he said.

He was telling them they better hurry and get away before Tice Harman come home. Another Indian stepped up. I knew him —a Cherokee that come sometimes to the station. Mad Dog they called him. Tice Harman had killed his son. It come to me that they had been thinking all along that they was at Tice Harman's. I jerked my arm away from the Shawnee chief.

"You think you're burning Tice Harman's house," I said. "This ain't Tice Harman's house. It's Tom Wiley's. Tom Wiley. Tom Wiley never killed any Indians."

They looked at each other and I think they was feared. Feared

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because they had burned the wrong house, but feared, too, of Tice Harman. Mad Dog said something and laid his hand on his tomahawk, but the old chief shook his head and took hold of my arm again. He spoke, too, but so fast I couldn't tell what he was saying. The Cherokee looked mad but he turned around after a minute and called to the other Indians, and they all left the house and started off through the woods. Mad Dog went first and half a dozen young Indians after him. The old chief and I came last.

He had hold of my arm and was hurrying me along, and all the time he kept talking, telling me that he had saved my life, that I was to go with him to his town to be a daughter to him to take the place of a daughter that had died.

I didn't take in much that he was saying. I kept looking back towards the burning house, thinking maybe they wasn't all dead before the Indians set fire to it. Finally I couldn't stand it no longer and I asked the old Shawnee. He pointed to one of the young Indians who was going up the ridge ahead of us. I saw something dangling from his belt and I looked away quick. I knew it was the scalps of my children.

We went up over the ridge and then struck north through the woods. I didn't take much notice of where we was going. I had all I could do to keep Dinny quiet—he warn't but ten months old. I let him suck all the way but it didn't do much good. We went so fast it'd jolt out of his mouth and he'd cry louder than ever. The Shawnee would grab my arm and say the other Indians would kill him sure if he kept that up. Finally I got his head down inside the waist of my dress and I held him up against me so tight he couldn't cry, and then I was scared he'd smother, but the Shawnee wouldn't let me stop to find out.

We went on, up one valley and down another, till finally we come out on level land at the foot of a mountain. The old chief made me go first, right up the mountainside. It was worse there than it was in the woods. The laurel and the ivy was so thick that sometimes he'd have to reach ahead of me and break a way through. My arms got numb and wouldn't hold the baby up. It was lucky for me I was crawling up a mountain. I would put him up ahead of me and then crawl to him, and in this way my arms would get a little ease of the burden. The old chief didn't like this, though, and every time it happened he'd slap me and tell me to go faster, go faster or they would surely kill the baby.

We got to the top of the mountain, somehow, and started down. My legs were hurting me now worse than my arms. It was going so straight down the mountainside. The back of my legs got stiff and would jerk me up every time I set my foot down, what they

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call stifled in a horse. I got on, somehow, though, all through that night and for most of the next day.

It was near sundown when we stopped, in a rockhouse at the head of a creek. The Indians must have thought they were too far for any white men to follow them. They made up a big fire and walked around it pretty careless. Two of the young Indians went off in the woods. I heard a shot and they come back dragging a little deer. They butchered it and sliced it down the middle, and slung the two haunches over the fire on forked sticks. The tenderer parts they broiled on rocks that they heated red-hot in the coals. A young buck squatted down by the fire and kept the venison turning.

Soon the smell of rich meat cooking rose up in the air. The juices begun dripping down into the blaze and I thought it was a shame for all that gravy to go to waste. I asked the Shawnee to lend me a little kettle he had, and I hung it on a forked stick and caught the juices as they fell, and then poured them back over the meat. When they turned brown and rich I caught the gravy in the little kettle and sopped my fingers in it and let the baby suck them.

The old chief, Crowmocker, smiled like he thought a lot of me. "White woman know," he said. "White woman teach Indian women. You make rum?"

I said I didn't know how to make rum, but there was plenty in the settlements and if he would take me back, take me just within a mile or two of the clearing, I'd undertake to furnish him and his men with all the rum they could drink.

He laughed. "White people promise," he said. "You in your cabin you forget poor Indian."

The Cherokee, Mad Dog, had been sitting there broiling the deer nose on a rock that he had got red-hot in the flames. When it was brown he brought it over and gave it to me. Then he went back and sat down, sullen-like, not saying anything. The fire shone on his black eyes and on his long beak of a nose. When he moved, you could see the muscles moving, too, in his big chest and up and down his naked legs. An Indian woman would have thought him a fine-looking man, tall and well formed in every way, but it frightened me to look at him. I was glad it was the old chief and not him that had taken me prisoner. I was glad, too, that the chief was old. I'd heard tell how particular the Indians are about things like that. I thought the old chief would likely do what he said and keep me for his daughter, but if it was Mad Dog he would have me for his wife.

I thought the meat never would get done, but it finally did. The Indians give me a good-size piece off the haunch and I ate it all, except a little piece I put in Dinny's mouth. He spit it out, but I kept putting it back till he got some good of it. Then I took him down to the creek and scooped up water in my hands for him.

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He'd been fretting because my milk was giving out, but the water and the juice from the meat quieted him a little.

After we'd both had all the water we could drink I went back up the hill and sat down on a log with Dinny laying across my knees. It felt good to have his weight off my arms, but I was afraid to take my hands off him. I was feared one of them might come up and snatch him away from me any minute.

He laid there a while a-fretting and then he put his little hand up and felt my face.

"Sadie . . ." he said. "Sadie . . ."

Sadie was the oldest girl. She played with him a lot and fondled him. He'd go to her any time out of my arms.

I hugged him up close and sang him the song Sadie used to get him to sleep by. "*Lord Lovell, he stood at the castle gate,*" I sang and the tears a-running down my face.

"Hush, my pretty," I said, "hush. Sadie's gone, but Mammy's here. Mammy's here with Baby."

He cried, though, for Sadie and there wasn't nothing I could do to comfort him. He cried himself hoarse and then he'd keep opening his little mouth but wouldn't no sound come. I felt him and he was hot to the touch. I was feared he'd fret himself into a fever, but there wasn't nothing I could do. I held his arms and legs to the blaze and got him as warm as I could, and then I went off from the fire a little way and laid down with him in my arms.

The Indians kept putting fresh wood to the fire till it blazed up and lit the whole hollow. They squatted around it, talking. After a while half a dozen of them got up and went off in the woods. The light fell far out through the trees. I could see their naked legs moving between the black trunks. Some of them was dragging up timber for the fire and some kept reaching up and tearing boughs off the trees. They came back trailing the green boughs behind them.

Two or three other Indians come over and they all squatted down and begun stripping the leaves off the switches and binding them into hoops. An Indian took one of the scalps off his belt—Sadie's light hair, curling a little at the ends and speckled now all over with blood. I watched it fall across the bough of maple. I watched till they began stretching the scalp on the hoop and then I shut my eyes.

After a while Crowmocker come over and tied me with some rawhide thongs that he took off his belt. He tied me up tight and it felt good to have the keen thongs cutting into me. I strained against them for a while and then I must have dropped off to sleep.

I woke myself up hollering. I thought at first it was the Indians hollering, and then I knew it was me. I tried to stop but I couldn't.

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It would start way down inside me and I would fight to hold it in, but before I knew it my mouth would be wide open and as soon as I'd loose one shriek another would start working its way up and there wasn't nothing I could do to hold it back. I was shaking, too, so hard that the baby rolled out of my arms and started crying.

The old chief got up from where he was sleeping and come over. He stood there looking down at me and then he lighted a torch and went off in the woods a little way. He brought some leaves back with him and he put them to boil in his little kettle. He made me drink some tea from the leaves and he gave the baby some, too, and after a while we both went off to sleep.

I woke with the old chief shaking me by the arm and telling me it was time to get up. I was still sort of lightheaded and for a minute I didn't know where I was. It was raining hard and so dark you couldn't tell whether it was day. The Indians had built a fire up under the ledge and were broiling the rest of the venison. I laid there and I saw the light shine on their naked legs and the tomahawks hanging from their belts, and I knew where I was and all that had happened.

The old chief untied the thongs and I stood up with Dinny in my arms. They gave me a little piece of venison and some parched corn. My lips were so swelled I couldn't chew, but I swallowed the corn and I put the meat in my mouth and sucked it till it went away. I felt milk in my breasts and I was glad for the baby, but he wouldn't suck. He wouldn't hardly open his eyes. He was still hot to the touch and I thought he might have got a fever from laying out all night in the rain. I tore off part of my top skirt and I made a sort of sling that I put around my shoulders to carry him in ; and I made a cover, too, out of part of the cloth to keep the rain off his little face.

Soon as we had finished eating, the Indians stomped out the fire and scattered the ashes so you couldn't have told there had ever been a camp there, and we started off through the woods.

We hadn't gone far before two of the young Indians left us. I thought they was most likely going back over the trail to watch if anybody was following us. I heard them saying that the folks at the settlement would be sure to send out a party. Some of the Indians thought it wouldn't do no good because the heavy rains had washed out the trail so nobody could find it. But Mad Dog said Tice Harman could follow any trail. I never knew before the Indians was so feared of Harman. They said he was the best hunter among the Long Knives, that he could go as far and stand as much as any Indian, and that they would like for him to come and live with them and be one of their warriors. Mad Dog said now that the only

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thing was to go so fast and go so far that even Tice Harman couldn't come up with us. He said " O-hi-yo " several times and I judged they meant to make for one of the towns on the river.

We went on all day, not stopping to eat anything except some parched corn that the old chief took out of his bag and handed around to us still travelling. Late that evening we come to a water hole. One of the Indians shot a bear and we stopped and built a fire under a cliff.

The Indians hadn't no more'n butchered the meat when two scouts come running into camp. They said that white men were following us, on horseback. The Indians all looked scared at this. Crowmocker stood there talking to Mad Dog about what we had best do. I went over and stood by them. Mad Dog said that they ought to kill the child and change the course, that they would have to go faster than ever now and I couldn't keep up carrying the baby. Crowmocker showed him the sling I had made and said the baby wasn't no burden to me now. He said he had brought me this far and was going to carry me on to his town to teach his women how to weave cloth like the dress I had on.

He told Mad Dog that and then he motioned to me and said, " Go ! " I started off, top speed, through the trees. Behind me I could hear the Indians stomping around in the leaves to cover up the signs of the fire. I went on as fast as I could, but every now and then an Indian would shoot past me. Pretty soon they was all ahead except the old chief.

We went downhill towards a hollow that had a little brook running through it. Mad Dog was in the lead, the other Indians right on his heels, jumping over fallen logs and bushes quick as cats. The old chief stayed by me, and when I'd slow up getting over a log or fall down in the bushes he'd jerk me on to my feet again.

The brook was narrow but running deep with the rains. Mad Dog started wading downstream, and the other Indians after him, single file.

The Indian that was in front of me stepped in a hole up to his waist. When he come out of it he took two, three steps and stood still. I knew then that Mad Dog had stopped and I knew he would be coming back down the line. I looked up, but the sides of the gully was too steep. I turned and ran back upstream fast as I could. I heard breathing close behind me and I knew it was the old chief, and then there was a big splashing. Mad Dog was after me.

I left the water and ran sideways up the gully. The breathing was closer now. I tried to run faster and I caught my foot in a root. They were on me as soon as I went down. Mad Dog grabbed me by both arms. Crowmocker got there a second after, but Mad Dog

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already had hold of Dinny. I caught at his legs and tried to push them out from under him but he kicked me away. I got up and went at him again but he kicked me down. He kicked me again and then he went on up the side of the gully till he came to a big tree and he held the baby by the feet and dashed his brains out.

I rolled over on my face and I laid there flat on the ground till the old chief come up. He pulled me to my feet and said we would have to run on fast, that the white men were following us on horses. I said no, I wouldn't go, I would stay there with my baby; but he and another Indian took my by the arms and drug me down the stream spite of all I could do.

We went on down the brook a good way. Towards dark we came out on the banks of a river. Water was standing halfway up the trunks of big trees. I saw the current, running fast and covered with black drift, and I didn't believe even an Indian could get across that raging river. But they didn't stop a minute. Crowmocker fell back and two young Indians took hold of my arms and carried me out into the water. The current caught us and swept us off our feet. I couldn't swim much on account of my clothes, but the two young Indians held on to my wrists and carried me on between them. The other Indians come right in after us.

They held their guns up high over their heads and swum like boys treading water. I could see their heads bobbing all around me through the black drift and I couldn't see nothing to keep all of us from drowning. They managed to keep out of the drift somehow, though, and all the time they were working towards the other bank till finally we come out in dead water at the mouth of a creek. The Indians that were holding me up stopped swimming all of a sudden, and I knew that we must have got across. It was so dark by that time I couldn't see anything.

I got out of the water as best I could and a little way up the creek bank. I fell down there 'mongst some willows. I saw the Indians come up out of the water shaking themselves like dogs, and I saw them falling down all around me, and then my eyes went shut.

The old chief woke me up at the first dawn streak. I heard him and I felt him shaking me, but I didn't get up. As soon as I opened my eyes the pain in my feet started up. I touched one foot to the ground and it throbbed worse'n toothache. I knew I couldn't travel any that day and I didn't care. I turned over on my back and laid there looking up at the sky. It had cleared off during the night and the stars was shining. The sky was all a pale grey except for one long sulphur-coloured streak where day was getting ready to break.

Behind me the Indians was looking to their guns and settling

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their tomahawks in their belts. I watched their heads and shoulders moving against that yellow light, and I saw one of them take his tomahawk out and swing it and then try the blade with his finger. I thought that if I just kept on laying there that maybe he would be the one to finish me off, and then I thought Mad Dog was quicker and would beat him to it.

The old chief was still shaking me. " Get up, Jinny. Day come."

" No," I said, " I ain't going to get up."

He took me by the shoulders and tried to pull me to my feet but I slumped back on the ground. I spoke to him in Shawnee.

" My feet bleed and I cannot travel. Let me die."

He leaned over and looked at my feet and then he called to one of the young Indians to bring him some white oak bark. When the bark come he boiled it over the fire and then he took the liquor from the bark and cooled it with more water and poured it over my feet.

The other Indians had finished scattering the fire and was starting out through the willows, but Crowmocker just sat there pouring that stuff on my feet. I could feel the swelling going down and after a while I touched my feet to the ground. It didn't hurt like it had, and I got up and we started off. He give me some parched corn and I ate it, walking.

He said we would have to travel fast to catch up with the other Indians. I asked him if the white people were still following us and he laughed and said no white men could get across that river. I owned to myself that they couldn't, and I didn't think any more about them coming after me. I thought the Indians would probably take me so far away that I'd never again see a white face.

We caught up with the other Indians towards dark. That night we slept in a thicket by a little river and I went to sleep under a tree with them singing and yelling all around me.

When I woke up the next morning they were having a council. They talked till the sun was high and then they split up into two parties. Mad Dog and three of the young bucks left us and swum across the river. The rest of us kept on up the bank. We travelled all that day through the woods and then we struck a divide and followed it into another valley. We had run out of everything to eat by this time except the strings of jerked meat that they all carried slung around their necks. We stayed two, three days at a buffalo lick, hoping to kill some game, but none came and we went on.

Most of the leaves were off the trees by this time and the nights were cold. I knew it was some time in October that the Indians come and burned our house, but I didn't know how long we'd been on the trail and I didn't have any idea what country we were in.

One morning we come out in some deep narrows just above

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where two creeks flowed together. A wild looking place with tumbling falls and big rocks laying around everywhere. I looked up at the cliffs over our heads and I couldn't believe my eyes. They were *painted:* deer and buffalo and turtles big as a man, painted in red and in black on the rock. Some of the young Indians acted like they had never been there before either. They would keep walking around looking at things and sometimes stand and stare at the pictures of wild beasts that were painted everywhere on the smooth rock.

The old chief took a way up the side of the cliffs, the rest of us following. The young Indians went up like deer, but I had to pull myself up by the laurel that grew down in between the rocks. We walked along a narrow ledge and come to a rockhouse. It was the biggest rockhouse ever I saw, run all along one side of the cliff.

The old chief uncovered an iron pot from where it was hid in a lot of trash in one corner of the cave and showed me how to set it up on forked sticks. He said that I would have to do all the work around the camp from now on, the way Indian women did, and when the spring rains come and melted the snows he would take me to his town on the Tenassee and I would learn more about Indian ways and be adopted into the tribe in place of his dead daughter.

I thought if he took me there I would never get away and I had it in mind to make a break for it first chance I got. I got hold of two strings of jerked meat and I kept them tied around my waist so I'd be ready when the time came. I thought I would wait, though, and maybe I would find out how far it was to the settlements. I would lie there in my corner of the cave at night, making out I was asleep, and listen to them talking around the fire.

I heard them call the names of the creeks that flowed through that valley—Big Paint and Little Mudlick; and further off was another creek, Big Mudlick, where they went sometimes to hunt. The names were strange to me and I never could tell from their talk how far it was to the settlements or even which way to go. I had an idea that the place I was in was secret to the Indians for it was a wonder to see and yet I had never heard any white body tell of it.

I asked Crowmocker what the pictures of deer and buffalo and bear were for and he said they were the Indians' fathers and that I would learn about them when I was adopted into the tribe. Once he pointed some mounds out to me and said they were graves. He said that he and his people always stopped when they come this way to visit the graves of their fathers that was all over the valley.

A spell of fine weather come, late in the fall. Indian summer they call it. We looked out one day and bees were swarming on the cliffside. Crowmocker was mad when he saw them. He said it

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meant that the white people were coming; that when bees swarmed out of season they were running away from the white people who had scared all the game out of the country and made it so that even bees couldn't live in it. I asked would the white people find their way into this valley and he said they couldn't—that it was a way known only to Indians; that if a white man ever set foot in it the great bear would come down off the wall and crush him in his paws. He said, though, that there would be fighting soon over all the land and a lot of bloodshed.

I knew that was all foolishness about the bear, but I thought likely as not there would be fighting and I wanted to get away worse than ever. One morning I was down in the hollow by myself, gathering wood, and I thought that was the time. Three of the Indians had gone off hunting and I knew the others were laying up in the cave asleep. I didn't think anybody would be following me, for a while, anyhow.

I started off, slipping from tree to tree, and I got quite a way up the hollow. I knew nobody was following me, but I would keep looking back over my shoulder all the time. I got to thinking. I didn't have any way to kill game, and nothing to eat but two strings of jerked meat. Worst of all, I didn't even know which way to take. Likely as not I'd starve to death in the woods, or freeze if the weather turned. I'd better stay with the Indians, where at least I could sleep warm and eat, if it wasn't anything but parched corn. I picked up my load of wood and got back to camp quick as I could, and didn't none of them ever know I'd been away.

I never tried it again, but sometimes I'd sit there on the edge of the cliff and pick out the way I'd take if I did go. There was a ridge covered with black pines rose up right in front of the rock-house. I thought if I could once get up there I could get down into the valley easy. I hadn't ever been over there, but I knew what the country would be like. I saw myself slipping along through that divide, around the foot of the mountain and over some more mountains till I'd come out on a clearing. I'd slip up to some cabin, towards dark. They'd think I was an Indian at first, maybe, and then they'd see my eyes was light and they'd take me in and keep me till I could get back to my own folks again.

We stayed in that rockhouse a long time. The leaves all fell off the trees, and one or two light snows fell, but the real cold weather was late coming. The Indians hunted just enough to keep us in meat. They said the pelts were thin that year and not worth taking. Sometimes they would take me along to bring in the game, but mostly they left me to work by myself. When cold weather set in we built big fires in the cave and it was warm inside like a house. When the Indians weren't hunting they would lie around on buffalo

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skins and sleep. The smoke was terrible and the smell of Indians was all over everything. At first it bothered me, but after a while I got so I didn't notice it.

I wasn't in the cave much, even in bad weather. I had to gather all the firewood. The Indians didn't have an axe and I couldn't get anything but dead branches. There wasn't much timber on the cliffside; so I'd mostly go up over the cliffs when I was hunting wood. It was as flat as the palm of your hand up there and covered with a thin kind of grass. It had plenty of trees on it but they were all twisty and stunted by the wind. The only sizable tree was a big elm. It was peeled for thirty or forty feet and had a rattlesnake painted on it—a monster snake coiling up around the trunk. I was feared to look at that snake. The Indians seemed to think a lot of it. Sometimes they would go up there at night and I would hear them singing and dancing and calling to it.

Somewhere up there, there were lead mines. The Indians never let me go to them, but they would go off and stay two, three hours and come back with big balls of lead. They made me smelt it out for bullets. I had to have a mighty fire. It would take me days and days to get up enough wood. I would heap it up in a big pile and then I would kindle the fire and keep it going for hours. When the lead melted, it ran down through little ditches into holes that I had dug to form the bullets.

I would sit there and think about my husband and my children. I would wonder whether Tom went out in the woods hunting ginseng the way he used to do, and was he still looking for me or had give me up for dead. When I thought of Tom the house would be there, too, not burning down the way it was last time I saw it, but standing with the rooms just the way they always were. I could see both rooms plain, even to the hole that was burnt in the floor when a big log fell out one night. The children would be playing in and out of the house like they did. It was like they were all living; it was only me that was gone away.

I would think back, too, over things that happened long before ever I was grown and married to Tom Wiley. There was a man named Rayburn stayed at the settlement one winter. Lance Rayburn. A big, strong man and a mighty hunter. We ate bear of his shooting all that fall. He was handy with snares too, and took over a hundred beaver down in the bottom. He courted me some that winter, sitting in front of the fire after the old folks were in bed. I laughed and went on with him, but Tom Wiley had just started a-courting me and ever after that my mind was only on him.

Sometimes I'd wonder how it'd been if I'd married Lance Rayburn instead of Tom, but I knew all the time I wouldn't ever have married anybody but Tom because he was the one I really fancied.

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I thought about Lance Rayburn and I thought about a lot of other folks that had come to the settlement and stayed and then gone on and wouldn't anybody know whether they were living still or dead. And I thought about people dead long ago, my old granny back in Carolina, ninety-eight years old and turned simple. She'd sit in the chimney corner all day long, singing the likeliest tunes!

I used to call those old songs to mind when I had to go down to the lick for salt. It was a place I didn't like to go. A deep hollow with three sulphur springs and a lick that covered nigh an acre of ground. The biggest lick ever I saw in my life. The way was white with the bones of beasts, and in between the piled up bones the long furrows that the buffalo made licking the ground for salt. I would walk down those furrows to the spring and fill my bucket with the salty water and go back up the hill to where my kettle was slung between two little birches. Sitting there waiting for the water to boil, I couldn't keep my eyes off the bones. I would take them up in my hand and turn them over and over, wondering what manner of beasts they had belonged to.

Once I made myself a little beast, laying all the bones out on some lacy moss, the front feet stiff like it was galloping off in the woods, the hind legs drawn up under him. A hare it might have been or a little fawn. Or maybe a beast that nobody ever heard of before.

There were beasts come to that lick one time or another not known to man. Bigger'n buffalo they must have been. One thigh-bone, I mind, longer'n I was and twice as big around as two good sized men.

I thought of a man used to be around the station, Vard Wiley, second cousin to Tom. Folks said he was the biggest liar in the settlements. He would stay off in the woods hunting day after day and never bring in any game except maybe a brace of wild turkeys. And he told tall tales about a lick bigger'n any lick around those parts, where the beasts come up in tens of thousands. He would lay up in a tree all day and watch 'em, he said, and not take a shot for wonder. There were beasts used there, he said, ten times the size of buffalo. He offered to take anybody there and show them the bones, and when they asked him why he didn't bring them back to the settlement he said couldn't no man carry them, nor no two horses.

Folks laughed at him, and the children round the settlement used to sing a song:

Vard Wiley's gone west, Vard Wiley's gone east,
A-huntin' the woods for a monster beast.
He'll make him a tent out of the wild beast's hide
And all the king's horses can stable inside.

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I called that song to mind and I thought how if I ever saw Vard Wiley again I'd go up to him and say I knew him to be a truth teller, and all the people would laugh at me maybe, the way they did Vard Wiley, but all the time I would be knowing it was the truth.

I did a lot of work while I was with the Indians. It was hard on me at first but I got used to it. It was better after Mad Dog left us. The old chief was like a father to me, and the young ones knew I belonged to him and didn't bother me. I slept off by myself in a far corner of the cave and he would wake me up at daybreak and tell me what there was to do that day. He took pains to show me how to flesh pelts and cure them, and he showed me how to split a deer sinew for thread and how to make a whistle to call deer out of birch bark and sticks. And after I got so I could sew skins good he had me make him a pair of leggings and trim them with porcupine quills—porcupine quills coloured with some roots he got out of the woods.

It bothered him the way I looked and he made me paint my face the way the Indians did. Fixed me up some of the red root mixed with bear's grease, and after I'd been putting it on my face for a while you couldn't have told me from an Indian woman, except for my light eyes.

He'd stay in the cave with me sometimes all day, his buffalo hide wrapped around him so tight that his knees were up against him like a chair. He'd sit there and rock back and forth on his heels and talk while I worked. Down in the hollow the young braves would be practising their war whoops. He would listen to them and laugh.

" Our young men give the war whoop loudly to cover up their fear of the enemy. It was not so when I was young. There was joy in the war whoop then."

He said he was a chief but he might have been something better. He might have been a medicine man. He had the gift of it from his grandmother. His own mother died when he was born, he said, and his old granny raised him. He told me about how she would take him into the woods with her looking for herbs and roots, and how she knew where everything grew and which roots would be good to take and which had no strength in them. He said that after I was adopted into the tribe he would tell some of her secrets to me, but the Spirit would be angry if a white woman knew them.

I asked him wouldn't I still be a white woman after I was adopted into the tribe but he said no, the white blood would go out of me and the Spirit would send Indian blood to take its place, and then I would feel like an Indian and know all the Indian ways and maybe get to be a wise woman like his old granny.

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He told me about his youngest daughter and how she come by her death, following what she thought was a fawn bleating. They found her days afterwards, three enemy arrows in her. Her death had been paid for with three scalps of warriors, and he would say that he didn't grieve over her, but I knew he did. I got to feeling sorry for him sometimes to have lost his daughter that meant so much to him, and then I would think how I had lost all my children and my husband and I would cry, dropping tears on the skin I was sewing.

I got so after a while that the Indian way of doing things seemed natural to me. I thought nothing of seeing dark faces around me all the time, but in the night sometimes I would dream of white faces. White faces coming towards me through the trees. Or sometimes I would be in a house again and look up all of a sudden and all the faces in the room would be white.

One white face was always coming to me in my dreams: Tice Harman, the man whose house the Indians thought they were burning the day they burned ours. I always thought that if anybody came to save me it would be Tice Harman. I could see him plain in my dreams. A little man, wouldn't weigh more'n a hundred and twenty pounds, but he had a big head. A big head and a big beak of a nose and long yellow hair down to his shoulders. His eyes were blue and in my dreams they glittered like ice. I would dream about Tice Harman and I would think that since it was him that brought all my trouble on me, maybe it would be him that would get me away from the Indians. But time went on and nobody came, and after a while I got so I didn't think much about it.

One evening I was gathering wood on the cliffside and I heard a lot of whooping and hollering down near the mouth of the creek. The Indians come out from where they were sleeping back in the cave and stook looking over the falls. A long whoop came and the old chief put his hands to his mouth and answered it. There was more whooping back and forth, and then Mad Dog came up the trail by the falls with about twenty Indians following him. They were painted for war and marched single file, all except the last six or eight. They were in pairs and in the middle of them a white man, walking with his hands tied behind him. A white man? A boy. Couldn't have been more than eighteen years old.

I had to step out of the path to let them by. The dead branches rustled in my hands. The prisoner turned his head. He looked straight into my eyes. It was like he didn't know I was there. I spoke to him.

"I can't do nothing," I said. "I'm a white woman, but I can't do nothing. Lord!" I said, "there ain't nothing I can do."

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He kept on looking at me but he didn't speak. They were hurrying him past. I dropped the branches and run after them. Mad Dog called to one of the young bucks and he caught me and held me. I fought him, but he held me till they had all gone up the path.

I went on to the rockhouse and kindled up the fire. After a while Mad Dog come down and told me to cook up some meat quick as I could. There would be singing and dancing, he said: they would want meat all night long.

I looked at him. "A present," I said. "A present for Kagahyeliske's daughter. Give me this boy. He is not good for anything but to gather wood."

His eyes were fierce. "Boy?" he said. "He has this day killed my brother." Then he laughed and smoothed my hair. "Jinny," he said, "pretty Jinny."

I made out I had to see to the fire and walked away. I put some bear meat on to boil and I told him I would call him when it was done, and he went on back up the path.

There was a moon coming. I sat there waiting for the meat to boil and watched it rise over the pines. Up over the cliff the Indians were dragging up all the dead branches they could find into one pile. After a while I looked up over the rockhouse and saw the sky all light and knew they had kindled the fire.

The stamping and yelling went on, and every now and then a gun would go off. Then there was running around the tree. You could hear the feet pounding and the long calls. "Ai . . . yi . . . Ai . . . yi . . . Ai . . . yi . . ." One for each man that had died that day. And the sharp cry for the scalp taking. They would act it all out and the boy standing there watching. He was dazed, though; he wouldn't see it for what it was. He wouldn't know what they were doing, might not know what they were going to do. There on the path he looked at me and didn't know me for a white woman. I ought to have found out his name and where he come from. I ought to have done that much. But he wouldn't have answered. And what good would it do his folks . . . if I ever saw white folks again. Then Mad Dog's hand on my hair. "Pretty Jinny . . . pretty Jinny . . ."

The flames shot up and lit the whole valley. The moon looked cold where it hung over the pines. I kept the fire up under the kettle but I couldn't sit still. I walked back and forth in the rockhouse, back and forth, back and forth, waiting for the shrieks to start.

They were a long time coming. I thought maybe it was already going on. Indians can stand there burning and not make a sound, and there have been white men that could. But this was just a boy . . .

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The first shriek was long and then they come short and quick, one right after the other. I got over in a corner of the rockhouse and held on tight to a big rock. After a while I let go of the rock and put both fingers in my ears and then I was feared to take them out, thinking it might not be over yet. I could see the old chief's shadow where he stood on the edge of the cliff calling to the new moon.

When he came down to the rockhouse Mad Dog was with him. They stood there dipping meat up out of the kettle. Mad Dog talked.

" It is too much. For five hundred brooches I could buy a girl of the Wild-Cats, young and swift, a fine worker in beads. A girl like a moonbeam, daughter of a mighty warrior."

His eyes were black in the circles of paint. His tongue showed bright between his painted lips. The red lines ran from his forehead down the sides of his cheeks to make gouts of blood on his chin.

A devil. A devil come straight from hell to burn and murder. Three white men killed that day and the boy brought back to torture. It was him that killed them, him that yelled loudest when the boy was burning. Him that set fire to my house and burned my children . . .

I saw him running through the woods, white men after him. I saw him fall, a dozen bullets in him. But he wouldn't be dead. He would lie there bleeding and look at me out of his painted eyes, and I would go up and stomp on him, stomp him into the dirt . . .

My hands shook so I dropped the sticks I was carrying. I was near enough now to hear all they were saying. Mad Dog was taking little silver brooches out of a buckskin. He poured them out in a pile on a rock and then counted them. The old chief stood there till he got through counting; then he swept them all up into a bag he took from around his neck.

" Brother," he said, " the woman is yours."

Mad Dog had left the fire and was coming towards me. I ran over and caught hold of the old chief's arm. I called him by his Indian name.

" Kagahye-liske, do not give me to this man. He has killed my children and burned my house."

He looked down at me and it was like he'd never seen me before. His face, not painted, was as cruel as the Cherokee's, the eyes bloodshot and the whole face swollen from the meat he had eaten.

" The war whoop drowns sorrow," he said. " This chief is my brother and a mighty warrior. He has this day killed three white men."

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I hung on to his arm. "Keep me for one of the young men of your village," I said. "The Cherokee are old women. You have said so and you have promised. You have promised to take me with you wherever you go."

He shook my hands off. "A promise," he said, "to a white coward! Go to your work."

He turned around like he was going to leave the cave. I run after him and caught hold of his knees, but he broke away. Mad Dog come and tied me up tight with thongs that he cut from buffalo hide, and then they both went away up the cliffs where the other Indians was still screeching and stamping.

The screeching and stamping went on far into the night. The fire under the kettle went out and it was dark except for a little light from the moon. I laid there on the floor, listening to the Indians and thinking about how it would be when Mad Dog came down to take me for his wife. I laid there, expecting him to come any minute, but the singing and dancing went on and he didn't come, and after a while I went to sleep.

The white boy that they had burned came to me while I was asleep. He came carrying a lamp that was made from the bleached skull of a sheep. The brain hollow was filled with buffalo fat and there was a wick in it burning bright. He came walking between the trees like he didn't have need to look where he was going. His hair was light like I had seen it when he passed me there on the path, but it was long, too, like Tice Harman's. His eyes were the same eyes that had looked at me there on the path.

I said to him what I had said there. "I couldn't do nothing," I said. "There wasn't nothing I could do."

He didn't speak—only made signs for me to follow him. I got up and walked after him. The rawhide thongs were still on me but they didn't bind any more and I moved as easy and as light as he did. He went down by the falls and clomb up over the hill to where the elm tree stood that had the big rattlesnake painted on it. He walked past the elm tree and struck out through the black pines that were all over that ridge.

Sometimes he would go so fast that I couldn't keep up with him, and then I would stand still and after a while I would see the light flickering through the trees and I would go on to where he was waiting for me. We went on through the pine woods and started down the side of the ridge. I heard water running somewhere far down below. I thought that would be Mudlick Creek, but when I got to it it was a brook I'd never seen before. We crossed it and went on up a path through a clearing. There were little shrubs all around, and in the middle of them was a house. It was my house

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and yet it wasn't. White all over and the walls so thin you could see the light from the lamp shining through the logs.

People were walking around in the yard and sitting on the doorstep. They moved to let me go through the door, but they didn't speak to me and I didn't speak to them.

The men that were sitting in front of the fire playing draughts didn't even look up when I came in. I went over to the hearth and tried to dry out my clothes. I stood there holding out my hands but no heat came. I looked at the logs and they were white like the timbers of the house, and the same light came from them. I saw that the men playing didn't have a lamp and yet there was light all around them.

People kept walking in and out of the cabin, men and women and little children. I would go up to them and look in their faces, but there wasn't anybody there I knew. I walked round and round the room. Every now and then the people would move out of the way and I would catch sight of the walls. White, with patches of green on them. I put my hand up and felt one of the logs. It was round and cold to the touch. No log at all, but bleached bone. I knew then that all the house was bone, the floor and the walls and the chimney, even the table that the men were playing on, all made from the big bones down at the lick.

One of the men at the table stretched his arm out and pulled me over to him. He had on a beaver cap and his face under it was pale like he'd been in the woods a long time. He looked at me and I saw it was Lance Rayburn.

Fiddling started up somewhere and all fell to dancing. They danced to one of my old granny's tunes:

There was an old lord lived in a northern countree,
Bowee down, bowee down . . .

There was bowing back and forth and balancing, and there were figures called, but wasn't any women dancing. I would see something going by and think it was a woman's skirt, but when I got up to it it would be fur or feathers dangling from a belt and all the faces around were dark, not like they were at first.

The great flames went leaping up the chimney, and all of a sudden I knew that they had built that fire to burn somebody by. I looked around for the one they were going to burn but he wasn't there. I said, "They will burn me next," and I saw what they would tie me to—the rattlesnake tree, going straight up from the table through the roof.

I went to the door and I saw through the black trunks a light flickering. I run and Mad Dog and the old chief were after me the way they were that day in the hollow. I thought, "They will

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kill me now when I go down," and I run faster and then they were both gone away and I was walking through pine woods, the light flickering on ahead of me.

I walked on and come to a creek that run along between wide banks of cane. The light shone on the water and made it light as mist. I stepped in, not knowing whether it was water or mist, and I could feel it coming up around my knees, water and yet not water. I moved along through it light as the wind till I come to where the creek forked. I could see the two forks and the white trunks of the sycamores along the bank, but I didn't know which way to go.

The light was all around me. I could see it shining on the reeds and on the little leaves of the cane and on the water where it broke on the rocks. Behind me there were voices talking.

"Jinny Wiley . . . Jinny Wiley, that was stolen and lived with the Indians . . ."

And then it was the old chief talking to the new moon:

"The white people . . . The white people are all over the land. The beaver makes no more dams and the buffalo does not come to the lick. And bees swarm here in the ancient village. Bees swarm on the graves of our fathers . . ."

The light that had been around me was gone. It was shining now through the tree trunks down a fork of the creek. I waded towards it through the light water, the voices following, and then they were gone and I was standing at the foot of a high mountain. I looked up and saw the light flickering at the top and I clomb towards it, pulling myself up by the scrubs and holly bushes.

I got up on the mountaintop but the young man wasn't there. I walked out onto the edge of a cliff and he was by my side. He said, "Look, Jinny!" and the flame of his lamp leaped up and lighted the whole valley and I looked across a river and saw a fort. I saw the roofs of the houses and the stockade and the timber burned back over the rifle range, and I saw men and women walking around inside the stockade.

I said, "I'm a-going over there," but the young man wasn't with me any more, and the dark that was all around was the inside of the rockhouse.

When I woke up the next morning the Indians had a big fire going and were all sitting around eating. I laid there and made out I was still asleep. They had found trace of buffalo down at the lick and were making ready for a big hunt. I thought maybe they would take me along to bring in the game the way they did sometimes, and then I heard Mad Dog say they would leave me tied up in the cave till they got ready to start for their town.

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I was laying with my face turned up and I was feared they could tell by my eyes that I wasn't asleep. I give a kind of groan and rolled over on my side. I laid there not moving while the talking went on all around me. Once footsteps come over to the corner where I was laying and I heard something slap down on the ground right by me but I didn't give any sign and the footsteps went away.

I laid there so still that I went to sleep again with the talking and the making ready for the hunt still going on. I was waked up by a kind of roaring sound. At first I thought it was the falls and then I knew the falls wouldn't sound that loud. I opened my eyes. The Indians were all gone and there was a big storm blowing up.

I laid there watching the pine tops lash back and forth in the wind, and the dream I'd had come back into my mind as plain as if it was something that had happened. I thought it was sent to me on purpose to tell me that now was the chance to get away. I knew that if the Indians come back with any game that night they'd feast high again and were more than likely to take me up on top there and burn me like they done that boy.

I sat up. A piece of meat was lying on the floor right by me. That meant that the Indians would be all gone all day and maybe another day. If I could only get free of the thongs I might get a long way off before they knew I was gone.

There was a knife stuck in a crack of the rock where they laid the meat. If I could only get hold of that! I rolled over and over till I got to the rock and managed to get up on my knees, though the thongs cut into me bad. I could see the handle of the knife sticking up out of the crack and I laid my face down flat on the rock and tried to catch hold of it with my teeth. But it was too far down and all I did was get my mouth full of grit and sand. I gave up and laid down again. The wind wasn't as high as it had been, but the rain was coming down hard. It blew way back into the cave.

I laid there with the big drops spattering in my face and a thought came to me. I rolled over to where the rain was pouring down off the roof and I laid there till I was soaked through. All the time I kept straining at the thongs and I could feel them giving a little, the way leather does when it's wet. I kept on, getting them looser and looser till finally I worked my way out of them and stood up free.

I listened and I couldn't hear anything but the roaring of the wind and the beating of the rain on the ledge. I tiptoed to the end of the cave and looked down the path. But I couldn't see any sign of living creature. I dug the knife out from between the rocks and I took the piece of cooked meat and a little kettle that the old

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chief had left laying around, and went off out of the other end of the cave and along the cliffside.

I kept to the path a little way and then I struck off through the trees down the hillside. The ground was wet and slid from under my feet in big chunks. I caught on to the trees all the way to keep myself from falling. When I got to the bottom I could look back and see where I'd come, as plain as if I'd blazed a trail. I knew I'd have to strike water. I run in among some pines and come to a wet weather brook. I waded right in. It was swift water and full of holes. I would step in one every now and then and go down, but I kept on as fast as I could. I felt all the time like the Indians were after me. I knew they had gone south towards the salt lick, but all the time I felt like they were right behind me. When I looked over my shoulder I could see the top boughs of the rattlesnake tree.

When I come out to where the brook flowed into the creek I didn't know which way to go, and then I thought that in my dream I was following water and I struck right down the rain stream. It was harder going than it was in the brook. Muddy water kept running in with the melting snows till you couldn't tell anything about the depth. It was well I was going downstream, but even then the current was a hindrance, reaching in and sweeping me off my feet sometimes into a hole that I would have a time getting out of. More than once I was in danger of drowning.

I kept on like this all day. When it was drawing towards dark I crawled up on the bank under some cedars and I laid there and I ate a goodsized piece of the cooked meat I had brought with me. The rain had fallen off to a light drizzle and there was some colour in the sky, sign of a clear day tomorrow. There was a flight of little birds over the water and then round and round the tops of the cedars. Some of them lit in the boughs of the tree I was laying under. I could hear them flying in and out and the quick cries and then the twittering as they settled down to roost. It was dark under the trees but the streak of light stayed on the water.

I laid here and watched it fade and I wished I could stay there where the cedar boughs were like a little house. I wished I could stay there and not run any more. I thought I would maybe sleep a few minutes and then I could go on faster. But when I shut my eyes I would think I heard the Indians coming through the trees and after a little I got up and went on again.

I tried wading some more but I couldn't make it in the pitch dark. I got up on the bank of the creek and pushed my way through the bushes as best I could. Sometimes the undergrowth would be so thick I couldn't make it, and then I would have to get down in the water again. All the way I was worrying about

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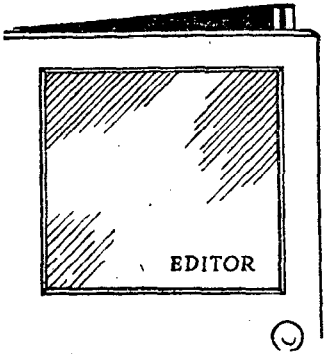

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losing time following the bending and twisting of the creek, and then I would think that was the only sure way to get out of the hill country and I had best stick to water, spite of all the bending.

Sometime during the night I lost my way from the creek and wandered in the pitch dark into a marsh that was all along the creek bottom. More like a bog it was. I couldn't seem to get out of it no matter what I did. I stood there bogged to the knees and couldn't even hear the creek running—nothing but the wind soughing in the trees. And I thought what a lone place it was and if I came on quicksand, as was more than likely, I could go down and even my bones never be found; and it seemed to me I might better have stayed with the Indians. But I knew it wouldn't be any use going back now. They would put the fire to me sure.

I stood there and I heard some wild thing passing. Pit pat pit pat it went; feet falling on dry ground. I pulled out of the muck and made towards the sound, and a deer or something broke through the thicket and went off through the woods.

I followed and come out on high ground, a slope covered with pine needles. I threw myself down flat on my face. I must have gone off to sleep. When I come to myself light was growing through the trees, and all around me I could hear twigs snapping and little rustlings. I got up quick, thinking it was the Indians coming, and then I felt foolish, knowing it was only game stirring at break of day. I saw two deer go by, moving slow over the brown pine needles. The air was so still they didn't get a whiff of me until they were out of the thicket. The buck wheeled so quick he almost knocked the doe over, and then they were both clattering off over the hill.

I went down to the creek bank and washed my face and let the water run over my wrists where they were scratched by the branches. I ate the last of my meat sitting there on a rock. When I got ready to go I found out that one of my strings of jerked meat had slipped off during the night. I couldn't hardly believe it at first. I stood up and felt all over my clothes time and again but it warn't there. "Well," I said, "it's gone and they ain't no use crying over it, but I wish to God it'd a been the little piece."

I got in the water and started wading again. The creek was shallow for about half a mile and then it run into a bigger creek. The two of them run on before me and I didn't know which way to go. I stood there looking. The sun was up and it shone on the water. I watched the riffles break on the black rocks where the sun caught them, and the place was not the same place I had seen in the dream and yet it was the same because of the light that was over everything.

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I remembered the way I took in the dream. "Left I'll go," I said, "like it was in the dream, and if it don't turn out right it's no fault of mine."

I went on, wading half the time. All that day I was thinking about something to eat. Seems like everything good I ever had to eat in my life come back to torment me that day. The smell of herring cooking, bothered me most. I would see myself, years ago, back in the Roanoke country, broiling herrings over the coals the way children did when their mammy wouldn't give them anything else to eat between meals.

I thought, too, about people wasting things, of a woman I knew used to give all her buttermilk to her pig, and I thought how it was shameful to have no mind for them that might be starving. And I thought how if I could have that pig's dinner one time, or even a mouldy piece of bread, the kind I'd thrown away many a time as not good enough for the dogs. And yet I'd been as wasteful as any of them in my day—worse, even, with game. I used to go hunting just for the fun of it. Seemed like there warn't nothing I liked better than sighting down a rifle. Lord, how I wished I could git my hands on a rifle butt just one more time.

I threw my knife once or twice at some small game, mostly rabbits, but it was a rusty old thing and not fitted to the hand the way a knife has to be to turn proper. One rabbit that I hit square in the middle got up and skittered off like nothing had happened, and I saw then it was a waste of time to throw at them.

Late that evening I come on some forward wild greens in a sheltered place on the creek bank. I went down on my knees and gathered every shoot. I found some twigs and went up to a rock-house on the side of the hill and built a little fire way in under the ledge the way I'd seen the Indians do. I knew it was craziness to build a fire, but it might be days before I'd come on any wild greens again. "I'll eat," I said, "varmints or no varmints."

I put my greens on to boil in the little kettle with a piece of the jerked meat and sat there, thinking about how Indians would go up on a cliff to sight over the country and how the least little smoke curling up would be a sign to them. Once I was on the point of putting the fire out but I couldn't bring myself to do it. I feared to feed it much and yet I'd catch myself putting dead twigs to it. It was a long time before the bubbles started rising up in that little old kettle. I sat there rocking on my heels and talking to them.

"Boil," I said, "boil. God's sake, can't you boil no faster'n that? And me setting here starving."

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I ate up every mite of the greens and drank the pot liquor and licked the kettle and then I set out down the hill as fast as I could. I could feel my stomach tight under my waistband and strength coming up in me from the vittles and I run faster than I'd ever run before. It was dark under the trees but there was still light down the water courses. I thought how in some cleared place or in a town it wouldn't be dark for two or three hours yet and I saw myself in such a place, moving around and talking to people but staying always in the light. And I said to myself, if I ever got into such a cleared place again it'd be hard to get me to set foot in the woods.

The creek I was following was a master tumbler. Straight down it went over big rocks and the water white everywhere with its dashing. Once I thought I would leave it and strike out through the woods again, and then I thought falling water'd take me out of the hills quicker'n anything else and I'd best stick to it long as I could.

I went on and then all of a sudden I come upon something that froze my guts cold; the print of a foot by the water. I knew it would be a moccasin but I stooped down and looked at it good. I told myself it might be a white man—might be a hunter wearing moccasins like most of 'em did; but I went on a little way and there were three, four footprints in some wet sand and all of them were moccasins. I thought then the game was up or would be directly, but I run on. I run on. I couldn't think of anything else to do.

It was still light when I come out on a big rock by some little falls. I stood there looking and I couldn't believe my eyes. A broad river ran there before me with clearings here and there on the bank and, right across from the rock I was standing on, a fort: a blockhouse with a stockade fence around it and the timber burned back over the rifle range.

I got off the rock and run down towards the water. A woman and some children were walking along outside the stockade. I called to the woman. She give one look at me and turned and run inside the fort, the children after her. I saw the gate swing to behind them and I knew they had shot the bolt.

I tore off my petticoat and waved it over my head and yelled loud as I could:

"Let me in! Let me in, I tell you!"

I could see heads at the upper storey and one somebody standing up on a stump to look over the stockade. But nobody answered and there wasn't no sign of the gate opening.

I looked over my shoulder. The woods were dark behind me and there wasn't any signs of Indians, but I knew they'd be coming

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any minute. I felt like I knew the place in the woods they were at now. I saw them trotting, trotting through the trees, one after another, the way they went.

I thought, "I'll have to do something quick or they'll get me sure, after all my trouble." I started in to swim it but I couldn't make headway against that current. I saw I would be drowning in a minute, and I swum hard and got back to shallow water. It come to me then that the folks in the fort didn't know who I was. I stood up in the water and yelled, loud as I could:

"I'm Jinny Wiley . . . Jinny Wiley that the Indians stole."

The echo come back to me from the woods, but there wasn't any sound from the fort. Then the gate opened a little way and an old man come out with a gun in his hand. He stood there looking at me and he turned around and said something to the folks in the fort and then he started down the path. I watched him coming down over the rifle range, an old man, grey haired and feeble enough to a been my grandsire. I shouted at him.

"You can't do it. Send some young body over."

He stood on the bank and shouted back at me, his old voice quavering across the water:

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I jumped up and down and shrieked, top of my voice :

" God's sakes, man, you going to let me die right here before your eyes ? I'm white ! White, I tell you ! "

" All of 'em's gone but me," he said, " and there ain't no canoe."

" Make a raft," I told him.

He nodded his head up and down. I could see his old grey beard a-shaking. " You better be ready to swim for it," he said. " I don't know as I can git across."

He called to the women in the fort and they come and brought an axe. There was a dead mulberry tree on the bank and they went to work felling it. The old man went off in the woods and come back with some grapevine. When the tree fell it split into three logs and he tied them together with a grapevine and then he and the women rolled them down to the water. They handed him two rifles and he laid them on the raft and started poling. The current caught him and he was going downstream. Yelling had started behind me somewhere in the woods. The Indians were coming.

I run down the bank till I got even with the raft and I swum out and clomb aboard. The old man poled hard. We got halfway out in the river and then the vines begun to come loose and the raft was spreading apart. I knelt down and held the logs together with my hands the best I could. The old man fell down on his knees and started praying.

" 'Tain't no use," he said ; " we can't make it."

I looked over my shoulder. The Indians were swarming down to the water. I knew they'd be swimming directly. The old man was still praying. I took the pole away from him.

" Go on and pray, you old fool," I said. " I'm a-going to git across this river."

I put all the strength I had into it and we made some headway. The yelling was closer now. The Indians were in the water. A shot rung out. I hoped to God one of 'em was hit. I poled harder and I saw some willow boughs ahead of me. I reached out and grabbed hold of 'em and we pulled ourselves to shore.

We went up over the rifle range fast as we could. I looked back once. The Indians had left the water and were standing on the bank. I heard Mad Dog calling :

" Whoopee ! . . . whoopee ! . . . pretty Jinny ! "

We went through the gate. I heard the bolt shoot home and I knew I was inside the fort. I fell down on the ground and the women and children come crowding. The Indians were still yelling. I sat up and the high stockade fence was all around me.

" Lord God," I said, " I was lucky to git away from them Indians ! "

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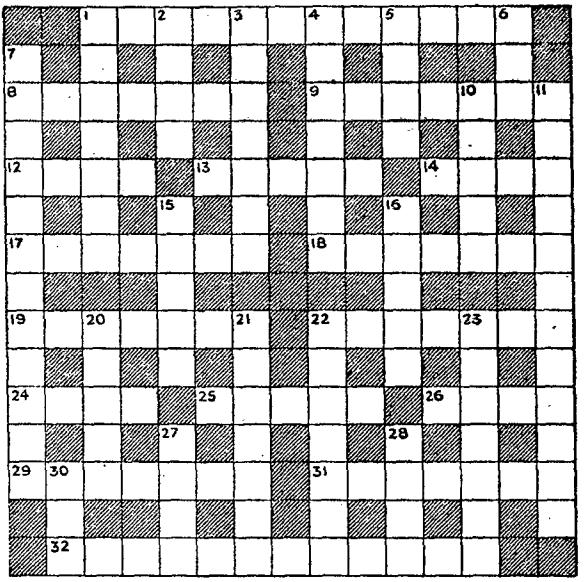
ARGOSY CROSS WORD

Solution on page 82



CLUES

Across

1 No one will get a cold reception at this celebration (12).

8 An artist backward in a failing makes another (7).

9 Offhandedly rude (7).

12 Enjoyed, surprisingly enough, by children in Spring (4).

13 The same as the last (5).

14 A composer at least forty-eight times renowned (4).

17 This bird is hung up to mark an occasion (7).

18 "The whining schoolboy with his—and shining morning face" (*As You Like It*) (7).

19 He shies away from community life (7).

22 Evidentally a teetotaller, as his search for water never ends (7).

24 A lake in the Rockies (4).

25 Well done, you rogue! (5).

26 Birdlike taunt (4).

29 Which R.A. made the place? (7).

31 There's nothing in the box for the artist's sketch (7).

32 Financial not joinery trouble makes it difficult to make this (4, 4, 4).

Down

1 Hear a number to encourage (7).

2 A quite separate bit of ammunition (4).

3 A smoothing process at the end of the day (7).

4 All an evergreen but the middle (7).

5 Changed mineral might handle roughly (4).

6 Only half a chunk of gold was used to make this animal (3).

7 Suggests a successful election and a large graceful hat (12).

10 Might a sweet drink beheaded make it not valid? (5).

11 Raising the spirits (12)

15 Ill feeling permissible in a card game (5).

16 A singer and a cooper make different uses of this (5).

20 These men used to carry my lady but now carry proposals (5).

21 1 down remodelled and maybe baked in clay (7).

22 Emblematic gadgets? (7).

23 Town of England, Scotland, Isle of Wight and U.S.A. (7).

27 Maybe needs a well or a first mincepie (4).

28 "Dark —! still sad when others' grief is fled, The only constant mourner o'er the dead!" (Byron) (4).

30 This at Ross would be a very large bird (3).

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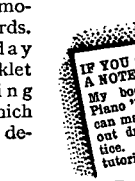
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